

# hīndū Kāshmir



F.M.HASSNAIN



**HINDU KASHMIR**





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F.M. Hassnain



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*to the memory of my parents*

**M.D. Mohamad and S. Barkat Begam**



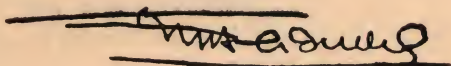


CHIEF MINISTER  
JAMMU AND KASHMIR

## Foreword

Since pre-historic times, Kashmir has been a meeting ground of many a varied and rich cultures. While absorbing new ideas, the Kashmiris, on their own part have created a mixed and composite culture which is tolerant, humane and kind at the same time. Such a happy blending of cultures is peculiar to Kashmir only and has influenced them upto present times in their outlook on every-day affairs and problems. While hurling a challenge to oppression, the Kashmiris have always tried to preserve their distinct cultural background.

I am glad to know that after his "Buddhist Kashmir" Prof. F.M. Hassnain, our State Editor, Gazetteers and Director of Archives, has compiled his next work in the series as "Hindu Kashmir," in which he has written in detail about the contributions made by the Kashmiris to history and culture in general and the Kashmir Shaiva philosophy in particular. I hope, he will continue the series and bring forth the contributions of the Kashmiris to Rishi System, which is a happy blending of the Buddhist, the Shaivist and the Islamic thought.



Jammu Tawi,  
March 8, 1976.

S. M. Abdullah

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## Preface

Hindu Kashmir is the second book in the series of books on the history and culture of Kashmir. The previous one, entitled Buddhist Kashmir, dealt with the Buddhist history of Kashmir and the present one deals with the Hindu rulers of Kashmir, who continued upto the 14th century. Since the last two decades, I have remained associated with history, archaeology and archives in my capacity as the Director of Libraries, Research and Archives and during all these years, I have, in my humble way tried to conduct some researches into the past. I have had the honour of getting fruitful guidance from :

Shri R.C. Kak, the renowned archaeologist;  
Prof. Dr. Tokan Sumi, the translator of Rajatarangini;  
Dr. R.K. Kaw, the Director of Sharda Peetha Centre;  
Dr. R.K. Parmu, the renowned historian;  
Shri J.L.K. Jalai, the renowned scholar;

and other local friends. For photographs, I have to thank the following friends :

Shri J.L. Bhan, Registrar of Antiquities;  
Shri K.K. Bakshi, Photo Officer, Information;  
Shri M. Ashraf, Organiser Mountaineering Wing;  
Shri A. Ishiguro, Student Kashmir University;  
Shri Y. Sora, Organiser Japan Alpine Club;  
Shri M. Oki, Director Haj, Nagoya, Japan;  
Shri M.H. Makhdoomi, Curator, S.P.S. Museum, Srinagar.

In the interest of future research, I feel it my duty to observe that no serious studies have been conducted so far, on our composite culture, which is Jewish, Buddhist, Shaivist



and Islamic at the same time. In his valuable foreword, Janab Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah has very rightly observed that "since pre-historic times, Kashmir has been a meeting ground of many a varied and rich cultures" of us, who are in the field, would do well to embark on anthropological, ethnological and cultural studies. In the present work, I have tried to depict the contributions made by our Hindu brothers to our history and culture.

Foreword has been so graciously bestowed for the present work, by Janab Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and I am really grateful to him.

Help was extended to me in many ways by the following friends and I take this opportunity to thank them:

Shri Wali Mohamad, Chief Librarian;  
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Shri M.A. Rafiqui, Head Molvi.

The manuscript was typed out by Shri Mukhtar Ahmad Kachkar and the index was prepared by Shri Ishtiaq Fida.

F.M. Hassnain

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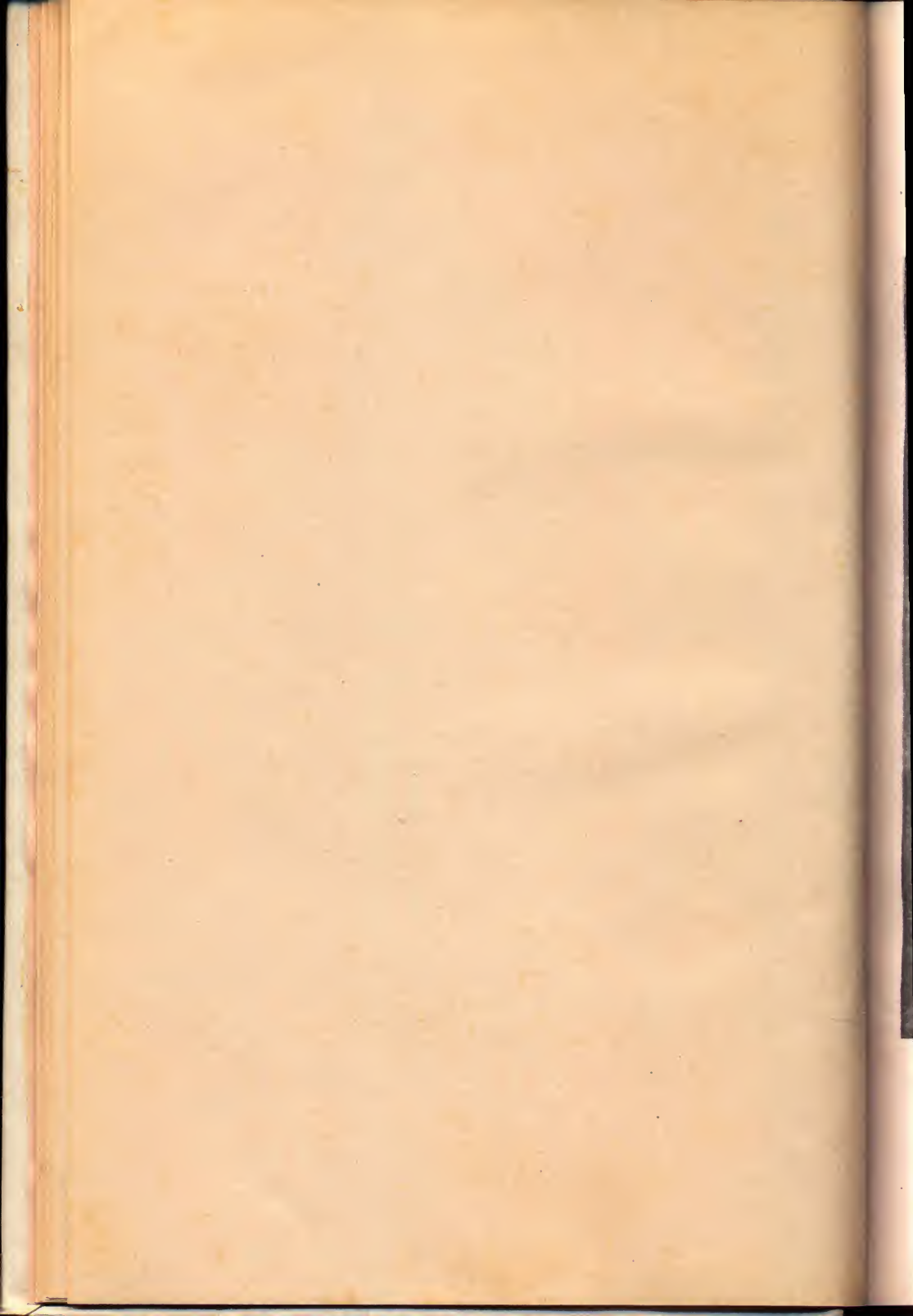
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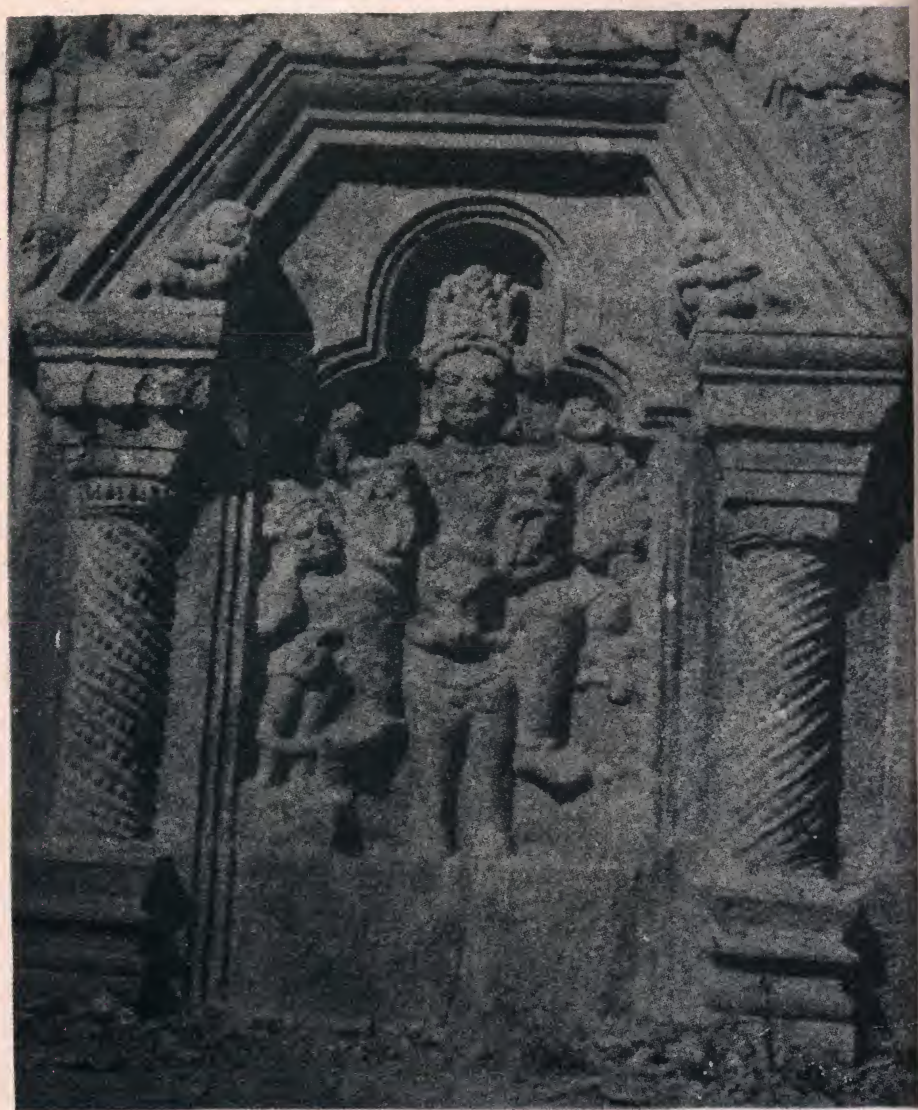




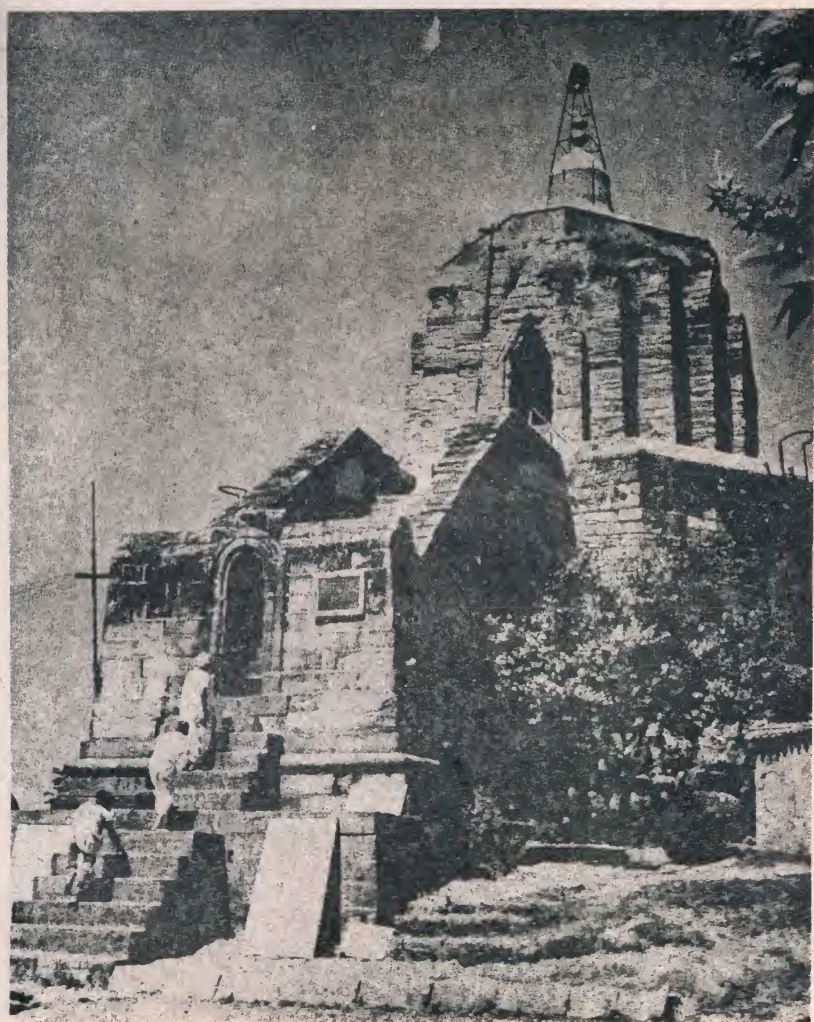






















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## Kasheer

“In the beginning there arose the source of golden light :  
He was the only born Lord of all that is ;  
He established the earth ;  
And the sky;  
Who is the God to whom ;  
We shall offer our sacrifices !”

.....Rig Veda.

An account of topography is necessary for understanding the historical contents given hereafter. Our information is based on foreign notices and local chronicles. Despite the fact that a few Greek generals succeeded in establishing their rule over Kashmir, it is curious that we do not find any significant mention of the valley in the Greek records. The river Jehlum was identified by them and named as Hydaspes and Ptolemy

referred to Kashmir as Kasperia. According to him, during those ancient times, the Kashmirians held the region between the Indus and the Beas. From the above account, we can safely infer that during that period, the Kashmiris ruled over a vast area, including the Punjab and the north-western regions of India.

The Kashmiris have been mentioned as good pedestrians by Dionysios and Nonnos in their poems. Herodotos has also referred to Kashmir as *Kaspatyros*. Panini is the earliest Sanskrit scholar to make a reference to Kashmir as *Kashmi a* and to the Kashmiries as *Kashmirah*. However, according to the local tradition, the name Kashmir was derived from *Kashyapur* or the city of Kashyapa Rishi. But, such a derivation in etymology can not be termed as a genuine source; for it would stand for a city and not for the country, which is a vast valley.

However, the first clear reference to the valley is contained in the Chinese records of the sixth century, when we had established diplomatic relations with that country. They have referred to Kashmir as a country, enveloped on all sides by the snowy mountains. Hiuen Tsiang, who visited Kashmir in 634 A.D. has referred to the valley as *Kia-shi-mi-lo*. During his two years stay in the valley, he acquainted himself thoroughly, with its topography and describes it as the country, which is enclosed on all sides by high mountains. According to him these natural bulwarks have saved the kingdom, from subjugation. He speaks of the Kashmiris as handsome, learned, frivolous and clever.

The official records of the T'ang dynasty makes mention of the ambassadors sent by Chen-to-lo-pi-li and Mu-to-pi to the Chinese court and we can safely assume, that the names can be identified as Chandrapida and Lalitaditya Muktapida, the two renowned rulers of Kashmir, during the ancient period. Ou-kong reached Kashmir in the year 759 A.D. and spent four years here in visiting the Buddhist stupas. He makes mention of the three passes, leading to the valley.

According to him, one of the passes leads to Tou-fan or



Tibet, the other to Po-lin or Baltistan, and the third to Kie-to-lo or Gandhara. From the above it is clear that the people of Kashmir had established political relations with the people of Ladakh, Tibet, Gilgit, Taxila and Peshawar, during the ancient period.

The Arabs provide us, with most authentic and accurate description in the eighth century. Al-Masudi, Al-Qaziru, Al-Idrisi and Al-Beruni have given vivid details about the topography of Kashmir. It was in the eighth century that the Arabs reached close to the boundaries of the Kingdom of Kashmir. Al-Beruni established close contacts with the Sanskrit scholars of Kashmir and even succeeded in influencing their writings. He even composed certain Sanskrit treatises for circulation among the people of Kashmir, and also collected many Sanskrit works from remote places.

Al-Beruni gives a detailed description of the passes leading to the valley, and remarks that the Kashmiris are very particular to safeguard their country from foreign invasions. They take every precaution to keep the passes leading into the valley equipped with strong defence and as such, do not allow any one to enter their country. Al-Beruni, further remarks that in former times, they would allow one or two foreigners to enter Kashmir and these would be no other than the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

Indigenous sources about the topography of Kashmir are very scanty. The *Nilamata-purana*, informs us that the valley was originally a vast lake, which was drained of its water by Ananta, who made an outlet for the water with the help of a plough.<sup>2</sup> He was a Naga and the town of Anantnag is named after him. The *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana is our most authentic source of information for the ancient geography of Kashmir. Kalhana has frequently referred to the sacred springs, holy shrines and tirthas, which abound in the valley. The nags or the springs, the streams, the rivers and images of the gods, were most frequent objects of local worship. The *Nilamata-*

<sup>1</sup> *Kitab-ul-Hindu*; Al-Beruni, trans. Sechau, V.I. p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *Nilamata-puran*; trans. Ved Kumari, V.I. p. 16.



*purana* gives a long list of the Naga places of worship, which are of ample topographical interest. Incidentally, it may be remarked that Hiuen Tsiang has described the Nagas as dragons. Kalhana makes references to the foundations of towns, villages and buildings by various kings. His description of these sites is of much topographical interest to us and makes it possible to understand the ancient history of Kashmir.

### Geographical Extent

Geographically, the country could be divided into three parts : the valley; the northern region, and the hilly areas. But the territorial extent of the country, known as Kashmir, has practically remained unchanged through the course of its history. The valley is drained by the river, Jehlum and its tributaries. The Jehlum was known as Vitasta in those days and the Kashmiris, call it by the name of *Vyeth* even now. It flows, out of the valley through the gorge of Baramulla. This oval shaped valley is a land of springs, lakes, streams, rivers, fields, forests and flowers.

There are numerous plateaus in the valley, which are known as *Uddars*. One such plateau at Pampore is famous for saffron cultivation. Most of these plateaus are found on the south-western side of the valley, from Baramulla to Shupian. The plateaus of Parihaspura, Padmapura, Chakradhara and Matan are of great historical significance. The vally, from ancient times, was divided into two regions; known as Maraz and Kamraz. The former comprised the country above Srinagar and the latter, below the capital city.

### Srinagar

From ancient times, the history of Kashmir has always been reflected as it were in the capital city of Srinagar. A study of source material on Srinagar, reveals that it has changed its position several times, during its past. Hiuen Tsiang, perhaps is the earliest writer, who found Srinagar in the present position, situated on both sides of the river, Jehlum. He also clearly distinguishes, between the two cities,

which he termed as the new capital and the old capital. The position of the old capital is marked by the present village of Pandrethan, which was known as Puranadhisthana, during old days. It was also known as Srinagri, during the period of the Kashmiri ruler Ashoka and his son, Jalauka, Pandrethan covered the areas from the banks of the Dal lake to Aitgaij and then to the hill slopes of khrew. In the middle of the sixth century, Pravarasena II, founded the new capital, known as Pravarasenapura at the site of the present Srinagar. It extended from Drugjan to the hill of Sharika, now known as Hariparbat. A description of the new capital has also been given in the writings of Hiuen Tsiang as well as, in the annals of the T'ang dynasty,

Kalhana boasts that the new capital had mansions which reached to the skies. During the Hindu period, permanent bridges across the river Jehlum were unknown and it goes to the credit of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin, to have first laid down a permanent wooden bridge, at the site of Zainakadal. During the ancient period, the boats were bound together with chains, and it served as a way for the traffic.

## Rivers

The name Jehlum for the river Vitasta is of recent origin and the Greeks had named it as Hydaspes. According to an ancient legend given in the *Nilamata-purana* the Vitasta represents Parvati, the consort of Shiva. According to the legend, Shiva struck the ground near Verinag with the point of his trident and the river *Vitasta* gushed forth<sup>3</sup>.

The three streams, which join the Vitasta near Islamabad are the Sandran, the Bringi, the Aripath, and the Lider. The Aripath is mentioned as Harsapatha in the *Nilamata-purana*. An account of the tributories of the river Jehlum and other streams is given hereafter. Veshau: has been mentioned by the name of *Vishoka* in the ancient Sanskrit manuscripts. Fed by snow and glaciers, it starts from Konsarnag. According to

<sup>3</sup> *Nilamata-purana*; vv. 257-62.



the ancient legend, it is a manifestation of the goddess Lakshmi. After passing through the Abrabal fall, it is fed by many small streams. After joining the Rembyar, it finally meets the river Jehlum at Sangam, known as Gambhira during ancient times.

The Rembyar was known as the *Ramanyatvai* in the ancient times. Fed by the snows of the Pirpanchal, it flows by Hirapur and gets divided into many channels. The Ramshi stream, which was known as Ramus in ancient times starts from the sacred spring of Ramsar spreads itself in the marshes.

The river Dudganga, is also known as *Chuchkul*. It starts from Dudsar or the lake of milik and after passing through Arigham, it submerges into the lake Hukarsar.

The stream of Kanihama starts from the Toshamaidan and after irrigating the Bangil areas, divides itself into the three streams, known as the streams of Kanihom, Hanzvir and Sultanpur. It submerges into the Wolar lake. The Sindhu, properly known as Sendlar starts from the Zoji-la and the Amarnath glaciers. One branch of it goes via Dras to Kargil and the other, after having been supplemented by the Amravati, passes through kangon and irrigates the Lar or the ancient Lohara. This river has been mentioned repeatedly in the *Rajatarangini*. According to some, the Sindhu is a manifestation of Ganga, and some are of opinion that it is the chief sources of the great river Indus.

The Madhumati starts from the Haramukh and passes through Bandipur and after irrigating a large area falls into the Wolar lake. Bandipur was known as *Behatpur* during ancient times and abounds in Jewish antiquities.<sup>4</sup> The Phoru of the Lolab valley is fed by the springs of the area and after having passed Kupawara joins the Jehlum near Sopore.

In the valley of the river Kishenganga, we have the sacred shrine of Sharda at Shardi. Through Shardi, a route leads to

<sup>4</sup> Nazir Ahmad; *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, p. 265-266.



Chilas. Kalhana makes many references to the tirtha of Sharda in his *Rajatarangini*.

### Lakes

Some of the lakes in Kashmir area of historical importance. The great lake of Wolar was known as *Mahapadmasar* during the ancient period and derived this name from the Naga deity, Mahapadma. The lake has been mentioned in the Nilamata-purana, the *Rajatarangini* and the Tang annals. From ancient times many legends have been connected with this lake and according to one, the area formed the site of a big city, inhabited by the Nagas, before its submersion.

The etymology of the Dal lake is very ancient and according to the testimony of Srivara, it bore the name of Bala, with two islets, known as *Rupalank* and *Sonalank*. All the sacred shrines and sites of Gopdari, Jyestheshvara, Theda, Sureshvari, Shalawana, Kuintolan, Shadarhadwana and other Naga relies lie on its eastern shores. The slopes of the mountains overlooking the Dal have adorned many ancient Naga, Jewish, Buddhist and Shaivist shrines. The hill of Gopa is also known as the Hrone of Sulaiman and is ascribed to Samdhimat, the saintly hero, who was put on the cross during ancient times.<sup>5</sup> This temple is an exact replica of the tomb of Absalom, the third son of David, in the woods of Ephraim, not far from Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup> The name Sankarachariya, ascribed to it now, is not an ancient one and as such is of recent origin.

A sacred shrine of great fame and importance is the temple of Ishesvara, at Ishbar on the shore of Dal Lake. It was built by Samdhimat for his great teacher Isana.

The Buddhist viharas and the Hindu temples, which were built around various lakes in the valley are extinct now. Manasbal, a very famous lake, is a tourist spot and during old times, the area surrounding it, abounded in gardens and shrines.

<sup>5</sup> *Rajatarangini*; Kalhana, Trans. Stein, II vv. 79-112.

<sup>6</sup> Nazir Ahmed; *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, p. 331.

Near Ahansar, in the same area, a Buddhist stupa is lying buried in the rice fields.<sup>7</sup>

### Springs

Most of the springs in the valley are connected with the Nagas and hence considered sacred. The earliest settlements in Kashmir started around these springs and later extended by the side of the streams and rivers. In fact, the economy as well as civilization of the valley is intimately connected with water. Mar-nag is vitur, Satkul-nag in Kamraz, Kas-nag in Bungas, Khil-nag, Nilapash-nag and Suk-nag in Beru and the famous Ver-nag are all connected with the Naga settlements. The four springs on the ridge of Kaji-nag mountain are sacred to the Hindus and dedicated to Rama, Sita, Lachamana and Hanumana.

The holy spring at Zewan is connected with the Takshaka, the lord of the snakes. The spring at Khrew is an object of worship and dedicated to Javalamukhi. An ancient temple in the old Kashmirian style exists by the side of a fine spring at Mamal in Phalgam. It is a place of pilgrimage for the yatis to Amarnatha cave.

The sacred spring at Bavan is also known as *Matsya-bhavan*, due to the abundance of holy fish. It is connected with the sun-god and occupies a prominent place among the sacred springs of Kashmir. In the village of Kother, there exists the sacred spring of *Papasudana* or the sin-removing spring. It is one of the sacred springs dedicated to Shiva. Al-Beruni makes mention of this sacred spring, saying that Mahadeva sends places of wood to this pond, which float on the water.<sup>8</sup> Abul-Fazal says that when its water decreases, an image of Mahadeva in wood appears floating on the water.

In devalgam, Brang, we have the most sacred spring, *Sundbrari*, dedicated to the goddess Samdhyā. It flows at intervals

<sup>7</sup> Hassnain F.M., *Buddhist Kashmir*, p. 50.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Beruni., *Kitab-ul-Hind*, trans. ii. P. 181.



during day and night and is visited by a large number of devotees. According to a local tradition, it is an outlet of a sacred cave.

The famous spring of Ver-nag is the traditional source of the river Jehlum. It is considered as the habitation of Nila, the chief of the Nagas in the valley. In Shūpiyan, we have a sacred spring at Degam, where Shiva cleaned himself. Another ancient and sacred spring is situated at Bhedagiri, which is forgotten now. It is also known as Buj-brar and at the site, a stone-lined tank is found on the top of a mountain. According to a legend, Sarasvati is believed to have shown herself as a swan here.

Most of the springs in the valley are dedicated to the gods and goddesses. At Tulamul, there is a holy spring dedicated to the goddess, Maha-Ragnia. Miraculous changes in the colours of its water are the manifestation of the devi. This sacred spring attracts a large number of pilgrims.

### **Mountains**

The valley is surrounded from all sides by the great mountains, which have provided it with natural protection and have a great bearing on its history. Kalhana speaks of these mountains as a protecting wall against foreign invasions.

The importance of mountains as a natural protection against foreign attacks and invasions have been recognised by the Kashmiris as well as the foreign scholars. Hiuen Tsiang, Ou-Kong and Sharif-ud-din speak of the mountains guarding the valley and the difficult passes leading in to it.

According to Vigne, the valley had twenty drangas or passes and important among these, was Baramulla, the western gateway to Kashmir. Hiuen Tsiang, who entered the valley from this pass in 629 A.D. speaks of it as the stone gate. Ou-Kong also visited Kashmir from this route. Al-Beruni, who entered the valley in the IIth Century calls it as the Babrahan pass. In the Pir Panchal range, there are a few passes and famous



among these are the Banasala or the Banihal pass, the Hastvanja on the old Mughal route in Hirpur and the Tosha-maidan pass, which connects the valley with Poonch. The Murbal pass lies between Kishtwar and Kashmir, while the Zojila pass leads to Kargil and Ladakh. Mihirakula invaded Kashmir via Hastvanja pass in about 515 A. D.<sup>9</sup> The Tosha-maidan pass has always remained prominent as a shortest route to Poonch. The Zojila pass was used by Gyalpo Rinchina in the 14th Century, when he came to Kashmir. Mirza Haider Dughlat, invaded the valley from this very pass in the 16th Century.

The Kashmiris developed a system of watch-stations by which a careful guard was kept on the passes. Such fortified posts were kept under the Dvarapatis or the lords of the gates. Later these military officers came to be known as *Maliks* or *Margesas*.

#### Political Topography :

The valley of Kashmir was surrounded with the neighbouring kingdoms of Prunts (Poonch), Urasa (Hazara) Karnavo (Karnah); Kashtavata (Kishtwar); Rajpuri (Rajauri); Lahora (Lohrin); Daradessa (Gurez); Lukh Butan (Little Tibet); Bud Butun (Big Tibet); Loh (Leh); Champ (Chamba) and Vallapura (Billavar).

The valley was divided into two administrative divisions known as Maraz (Madavarajiya) and Kamara (Kramarajiya) mentioned by Kalhana, which were further divided into 27 divisions called vishayas. Some of the ancient towns and the villages, which have survived upto the present are Zewan (Jayavana), Khunmoh (Khonamusa), Awantipur (Vantapor), Pampur (Padamapura), Latpur (Lalitapura), Dachenpur (Dakhshinapura), Chakdar (Chakradhara), Bijbehara (Vijayeshwara), Banihal (Banasala), Diysar (Devasara), Nagam (Nagrama), Khag (Khagi), Paraspur (Parihasapura), the capital of Lalitaditya. Similarly, modern Trihgam was known Trigrami in the past. Bengil was known as Bhangila in the past. Pratapapura

<sup>9</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*; trans. Stein, v. II. p. 394.

is known as Tapar now, and is the site of an ancient monument. Similarly, Kanishkapura is known as Kanispor, Varahamula as Baramulla and Hushkapura as Ushkur.

### Early Settlers

Most authentic information about the early settlers in the valley of Kashmir has been provided by the *Nilamata-purana*. The tribes mentioned therein are the Nagas, the Pishachas, the Darvas, the Abhisaras, the Gandharas, the Juhundras the Sakas, the Khasas, the Tunghanas, the Mandavas, the Antargiris and the Bahirgiris.<sup>10</sup> The Yavanas settled in the valley in much later period. The Nagas were the aboriginal snake worshipping tribes inhabiting Nagar in Gilgit, some areas in West Punjab and Kashmir. The Vedas makes no mention of the Nagas, which certifies their non-Aryan origin. However, they were the first to settle in the valley. The Pishachas, who came next, were the inhabitants of the mountaineous regions of the Himalayas and the Hindukush. The inter-mixture of the Naga and the Pishacha dialects produced the original Kashmiri language, to which further additions were made by the other tribes, who came to settle in the valley.

The Darvas belonged to Daradistan and the Abhisaras lived on the banks of the Chenab.<sup>11</sup> The Gandharas were the tribes, who lived in the north-west Punjab and Afghanistan. The Juhundaras were the inhabitants of the Central Asian region. The Sakas were the Scythian tribes, who settled in Kashmir during the ancient period of our history. They founded small kingdoms in Chitral, Sindh and Kashmir. Azes, Azilises and Maues, who ruled over the valley, belonged to this tribe. The Khashas were the Semites, who founded the towns of Kashan in Iran, Kash in Bukhara and Kashgar in Turkistan. The Tunghanas belonged to the Central Asia, the Mandava and the Madras to Poonch, Rajouri, Jammu and Sialkot, while the Antargiris and the Bahirgiris were the tribals from the Himalayan ranges. Among the Yavanas are included the foreign peo-

<sup>10</sup> *Nilamasa-purana*; vv. 80-83.

<sup>11</sup> *Rajatarangini*; trans. Stein, VI. 180; IV 712.



ple, such as, the Huns, the Kashans the Greeks, the Turks and other people, who occupied Kashmir, from time to time.

### **The Kashmiri Language**

The aboriginal tribes of the valley evolved their own language, which can be termed as Kashmiri. But with the advent of the Aryans, the Kashmiri underwent a change and was replaced by the language of the outsiders. Though it was completely sanskritised in succeeding centuries, yet the Kashmiris continued to adhere to their vowel intonation as well as their own way of pronunciation. They also did not foresake their own method of forming sentences. Researches into the Kashmiri linguistics would surely reveal that original Kashmiri words, idioms and proverbs can still be traced in the present day Kashmiri language, which is but a mixture of many languages, such as Aramaic, Sanskrit and Persian.

In the ancient literature, Kashmir has been mentioned as of Gandhara, which may be termed as a cultural or political unit extending from Annatnagh in Kashmir to Peshawar, with Texila, as its centre. Before the rise of Buddhism, the whole of Gandhara, was under the Nagas. In the old traditions, we find some Naga scholars, like Kapila, who is considered the *Sankiya—darashan*, Patanjali, the author of *Paramaratha-sara*, who is also known as an *atura* of Shesha-naga was also a Naga. In the same way, Naga—arjuna and Naga-bodhi, who command much respect in the Buddhist world, were also Nagas. These Nagas often rose against the the Aryans, because they were against the Aryan caste system, their religious pantheon and their superiority complex. Hence, when the message of Buddhism reached them, they were the first to accept it. It is certain that Buddhism came to Gandhara and Kashmir at the same time. In the Kashmiri chronocles, it has been mentioned that 150 years prior to Naga-arjuna, a Buddhist scholar, Sakya-Simha, preached Buddhism in Kashmir. Naga-arjuna lived in the 1st Century A.D.



## The Aryans

Most of the historians hold that the Aryans came to India through the Himalayas via Kashmir. Divergent views have been expressed about the original home of the Aryans but all agree that they used to enter Indian plains through the north.

There is a legend that the primitive people lived in Kashmir during summer and went to the plains during winter and most of them might have settled and spread in India. Hence it is assumed that the Aryans, who settled in India, came from Kashmir and this event took place some time between 6000 to 4000 B.C. It is interesting to note that Kashyapa Rishi of Kashmir has been associated with the Caspian sea by some scholars. It has been presumed that this savant of the Aryan mythology had led the Aryan people into India from the Caspian sea. But his name is so much connected with Kashmir that it is difficult to accept the above opinion.

## Kashyapa

The first Aryan, whose name confronts us at the beginning of our study is Kashyapa, who has been mentioned as the father of the people. He is also spoken of as a great saint, who had practised penance for a long time. Thus, it appears that Kashyapa was both a political and a religious head. Kashyapa was a man of great status and position and he could summon other men of importance to his help, of need. This valley was inhabited by Jalodbahava and his people and Kashyapa wanted to destroy them. In spite of his important position, he alone was not able to face Jalobahava. The *Nilmata-purana* gives a lengthy account about the destruction of Jalobahava. It is evident that the Aryan settlers had to face a strong opposition from the original inhabitants of the valley.

Nila-naga has been mentioned as the king of the Kashmiri Nagas. Nila-nag spring exists even at present and is now known as Veri-nag. In those days, colonies flourished near water and especially around the springs and every owner of the spring was known as a Naga.

The people shared the belief that the snakes lived in springs, They also believed that snakes could appear in human form, marry and have children. A spring is called a *nag* in Kashmiri even today. The earliest inhabitants of the valley cherished aboriginal beliefs, among which the snake cult was popular. But with the advent of the Aryans, their belief in the aboriginal deities sank into oblivion. However, their belief in the ghosts and the spirits continued and got mixed-up with the Vedic and the Puranic gods and goddesses.

The river Vitasta in those days, had been represented by the name of the goddess Gauri and the lake Wular had been named after Padma-naga. We come to the conclusion that in the time of Nila-naga, the wular lake existed in the valley.

### **The Naga Kingdom**

The Naga kingdom extended from Shardi to Ver-nag and had ruled over by the descendents of Kadru and Vinata. Who had divided it, between themselves. When, the children of Kadru were forced to migrate from Ver-nag, Vishnu came to their help. Kalhana speaks very high of the Nagas, who made the valley safe from the foreign invaders. During their rule, big and lofty house of timber were constructed by the people. Many works of public utility, like embankments and stairs descending into rivers were carried out by them. They also established certain seats of learning. Many gardens were laid out by them, which had grape and fruit plants, irrigated by canals and streams.

Kalhan, while praising the conditions prevailing at that time says that 'things that even in heaven are difficult to find are common there'.<sup>12</sup>

Much is not known about the kings of Kashmir after the death of Nila-naga and his successors. Gonanda I, according to Kalhana, is the first important ruler of Kashmir, whose successors are stated to have ruled Kashmir for 2268 years. This may be an exaggerated account, because the kings whose pre-

<sup>12</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*; trans. Stein, 1.42.



ceeded Gonanda, are not known to us. Scanty information about them proves that they were mighty and possessed wealth, elephants and palaces.

### Gonanda

Gonanda I, has been spoken of, as a glorious king. He was an over-tord of the northern region of Kashmir, from Drass to the Haramukh. Jarasanda, the king of Magadha called him for help against Krishna<sup>2</sup>. Gonanda proceeded towards India, with large army and is said to have besieged the town of Mathura. The hostile armies pitched their campus, on the banks of river. A fierce battle was fought, in which thousands of soldiers from each side fell to the ground. It is interesting to note that the ensign of the Kashmiri forces was the plough.<sup>13</sup> The king of Kashmir died heroically, while fighting in the battle field. One of the important conclusions, which we obtain from the above is that Kashmir's help was sought by an Indian king in those days and the Kashmiris fought bravely in the battle grounds.

### The First Woman Sovereign

The illustrious Damodara ascended the throne of Kashmir after the death of his father. He always remained sad and brooded over his father's death. He shunted pleasure and thought of taking the revenge. In the meanwhile, news came about the *sayumbara* of the daughter of the king of Gandhara. Damodara had also been invited and he utilized this opportunity in forcing a battle upon Krishna, who had slain his father. But he was defeated and killed. He left a pregnant widow named Yasovati, who was installed by Krishna on the throne of Kashmir.

An interesting and important constitutional point was raised. The men of the age resented the rule of a woman. They grumbled at the coronation of a widow, because they considered women as objects of luxury and enjoyment. But Krishna pleaded here cause. He threatened as well as appealed to them and

<sup>13</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, 1.59.



thus was able to secure their consent. They promised to remain loyal to the first woman sovereign of Kashmir, who ruled with confidence for nearly 15 years.

### The Infant king

Just a few months after her accession, the queen gave birth to a son, who was styled after his father as Gonanda II. The priests performed religious ceremonies. Two nurses were engaged to bring up the child and, thus he was brought up in ease and luxury. The officers of the State took much care of him, as the sacred relic of their old king. A grand coronation was held when the infant king ascended the throne. Conch shells were placed before him, so that he may continue his play. In the mean-while, the ministers began to discuss constitutional and religious issues. The most important issues was about the participation of Kashmir into the great civil war of India. The king being infant, no decision could be taken. Moreover, neither the Kurus nor the Pandavas had invited them to take part in the civil war.<sup>14</sup>

During his reign, there came one Harandeva, a descendant of the Pandavas in Kashmir. As he was very poor, the king took pity upon him and offered him a job in his service. Harandeva became such a great favourite with the king that he was soon raised the position of the Chief Minister. One day, having seized an opportunity he murdered the king. Having usurped the throne, Harandeva became the founder of the Pandava dynasty in Kashmir.

About the thirty five kings, who succeeded after, we get no complete information from the *Rajataranagini*. According to Kalhana 'their names and deeds have perished through the destruction of the records.'<sup>15</sup> Attempt have been made to fill-up the gap by historians like Ratnakar, Mulla Ahmad, and Hassan Shah, who give a brief account of the Pandava dynasty.

<sup>14</sup> Kalhana., *Rajataragnini*, trans. Stein, 1.61.

<sup>15</sup> Kalhana., *Rajataragnini*, trans. Stein, 1.70-76.

One of the kings, namely Sandiman is believed to have built the ancient temple on the top of Gopadari hill. Some have identified the name of Solomon the prophet, with Sandiman, and that accounts of for the name given to the hill near Srinagar as *Takhat-i-Sulaiman* or Solmon's throne. Another king Bhima-sena is supposed to have subdued the Central Asian Kingdoms. The gap of the 35 lost kings has been filled up with the help of the ancient chronicles as well as the local legend. Some kings out of the 35 lost kings belonged to the Pandava dynasty. One of them was Lava, who founded the town of Lolab. He had a vast army and fought many battles. A legend attributes him with the erection of 'eighty four lakhs of stone buildings.' He is said to have granted numerous *Jagirs* to the Brahmans for the maintenance of shrines.

### Petty Kings

He was followed by his son, the louts eyed Kusa, who founded the town of Kurushara. Khagendra, his son was a brave warrior, a leader of men, who founded two famous towns of Khonomu and Kakapur. Surendra, the next king has been termed as a great kings in the *Rajatarangini*. He had assumed five titles and his sway extended in the country of the Darads. He is also credited to have even founded the town Skardu. He attained a great fame, for he was pious and is remembered for his religious works. He died without any issue, and was the last king from the family of Harandeva.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the kings who came after him, namely, Godhara, Suvarna, Janaka and Sakinara are not important except Suvarna, who got dug out a canal for irrigation purposes. A few severe earthquakes, seem to have occurred in their regins, which may have shattered the economy of the valley.

### Rambro and Lolare

The affairs of the kingdom fell into confusion and the people had to bear innumerable sufferings. We may mention one king,

<sup>16</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, 1.91-94.



whose name was Bambro. A legend says that Bambro after defeating Prahlad came to the throne of Kashmir. There was a beauty named Lolare, who was extremely slender and her name brings to mind a moon-like face, with red apple cheeks, rosy lips and lotus eyes, covered with the cloudy dust of fragrant curls. There is a long ballad in the Kashmiri, relating the love affair between Bambro and Lolare. She was an embodiment of love, a sacred thing to be worshiped and a pure heart to be cherished. Both Lolare and Bambro led an adventurous life.

### **The Greeks in Kashmir**

Alexander set out for his Indian expedition in about 327 B.C. from his base camp in Bactria, which touched Gandhara. Having crossed the rocky and forest clad valleys of the Hindu Kush, he reached Taxila, the capital city of Gandhara. After having spent some time at Taxila, he reached a tributary of the river Sutlej, wherefrom he turned back for home. Thus Taxila became a meeting ground between the Mediterranean and India, a center of Greece-Roman art and culture for nearly eight hundred years. It remained under the Greek rule for nearly 20 years and during that period, small contingents of the Greek soldiers disposed themselves in the Hindu-Kush, Chitral, Gilgit, Hazar and Kashmir. They founded small colonies and chiefships in Bactria, Central Asia and Afghanistan. These small Greek states were ruled over by military commanders, who had got detached away from the main command of the Greek army. Famous among these viceroys are Demetrius, Pantaleon, Agarthocles, Apollodorus, Menander, Antialcides, Strato, Eliocles, Lysias and Archebius. We have numerous specimens of the coinage issued by these Graeco-Indian rulers.

### **The Greeks Kings**

The Greek period in the history of Kashmir is completely shrouded in mystery. Here and there, we find evidence; archaeological and numismatic, which proves that after Alexander's invasion, numerous chiefships came to be established in the north-western parts of India. These Greek overlords, who established their small kingdoms in Kashmir, seem to have owed



allegiance to their masters in the beginning but after lapse of some time and, when the central rule had weakened, they assumed independent postures. It was during their rule that the Roman art travelled to Kashmir through Syria, Persia and Kabul. The Sun Temple of Kashmir has its closest links with the Temple of the Sun at Baalbeck in Syria. The Kharoshti inscriptions and statues found by the author in the Lolab valley and numerous Greek coins preserved in the Srinagar Museum, all point out to the factual existence of the Greeks in Kashmir. It was during the rule of the Greeks that Buddhism was introduced in Kashmir.

The following are the Greek kings, whose coins have been located in Kashmir :

1. Euthudemos. 220-B.C.
2. Eukratidos. 175 B.C.
3. Apollodotos.
4. Menandrou.
5. Nikephoro-antimakhos—
6. Soterios.
7. Megalou-Azou.
8. Basileos Basileon Megalon Azon.
9. Megalou Azilison
10. Spali-risou.
11. Abda-gasou.

The Greeks made donations to the Buddhist *Sangha*, erected *stupas* over the sacred relics, constructed *virharas* and installed images in them.

It has been, now established that at the time of Alexander's invasion, Kashmir formed a part of Gandhara. This country came under the influence of the Achaemenid and the Greek Kings. It may be stated that in the latter half of the 6th century B.C. Achaeminian monarchy rose to power in Persia under the leadership of Cyrus. He is believed to have subjugated Gandhara. In Kashmir are found the Bactrian, the Scythian and the Parthain coins. After the departure of Alexander, Chandragupta Mauriya, entered into a treaty with Seleukos

and got control over the north-western India.

### Buddhism in Kashmir

The *Rajatarangini* begins at the time of the Kuru war, which occurred sometime between the 12th and the 14th century B. C. Surendra is the first Buddhist ruler of Kashmir, who built the first *vihara* in Kashmir. His reign can be fixed in the middle of the 1st century B. C. It is recorded that during the rule of Ashoka (269-227) B. C., some monks of the Sthaviradin school fled away to Kashmir due to the lack of royal patronage. According to the Chinese sources, it was Madhyantika, a disciple of Ananda, who succeeded in bringing Buddhism to Kashmir, after having subdued the Nagas by his supernatural powers.<sup>17</sup> His journey to Kashmir has also been narrated in the Kashmiri sources.

It is reported that Madhyantika brought with him many *bhikus* for settlement and he himself remained in the valley for nearly 20 years. He developed agriculture in Kashmir and also introduces saffron cultivation for the first time.

But Buddhism could not achieve much success during his life time. Demetrius became the king of vast territory, which included Kashmir also. Similarly Menander also exercised pressure on Kashmir.<sup>18</sup>

### Menandera

It was Menandera, who came under the influence of Buddhism. It goes to the credit of Nagasena, to have defeated Menandera in a religious discussion, which was held at a place near Kashmir.<sup>19</sup> The *Milindapanha* is the best source of information on the history of Buddhism in Kashmir. It informs that Menandera built the Milinda *vihara* and joined the *Sangha* as a monk and finally attained *arhathood*.

<sup>17</sup> *On Yuan Ch wang's Travels in India.*, trans. Waters, V. I. p. 262.

<sup>18</sup> *Greeks in Bactaria and India.*, Taran., p. 155.

<sup>19</sup> *Milindapanha.*, trans. Trenckner, pp. 82-83.



The *Milindapanha*, which was written originally in Kashmiri was subsequently translated into the Pali and the Senhalese.<sup>20</sup> The Indo-Greeks appear to have accepted the doctrines of Buddhism, and the Kharoshthi inscriptions found at Swat, Taxila and Lolab in Kashmir, prove the existence of Buddhism during the period. These kings erected *stupas*, constructed *viharas* and installed images of the Sakyamuni. Thus, it is clear that Buddhism came to Kashmir long before the region of Ashoka Maurya.

We must revert to the prophecy made by Buddha to Vijrapani that Madyantika would bring his message to the Nagas of Kashmir. In fact, the Nagas believed in cooperative life and had their own communes in various parts of the valley. As they did not like the caste system of the Brahmans, they embraced Buddhism.

### Ashoka of Kashmir

Ashoka Maurya of Magadha came to power in 269 B. C. His fame mainly rests on the position, which he held as the great patron of Buddhism. His edicts have been found in Shahbazgarhi and Nashera, which formed a part of Gandhara in those days. It is contended that this Ashoka sent missionaries to different lands, including Kashmir. It was during his reign that Majjhantika was deputed to Kashmir, which was under the rule of Aravala, who ruled over Kashmir before 1260 B.C.<sup>21</sup> While Ashoka ruled over Magadha between 269-227 B. C., the Ashoka of Kashmir started his reign in about 1182 B. C. It is evident that the Ashoka of Kashmir is some different personality from the Ashoka of Magadha.

The Kashmiri Ashoka was the son of Sachinara and the great grandson of Sakuni, while the Ashoka of Magadha was the son of Bindhusara. Both the Ashoka have different parentage and there is gap of nearly one thousand years between the two. While the edicts of the India Ashoka contains

<sup>20</sup> *Kashmiri Shairi*, Shatiya Academy, New Delhi.

<sup>21</sup> Wilson H., *The Hindu History of Kashmir*, p. 144.



detailed description of countries, where Buddhist missionary activities were patronised by him, none of the edicts contains the name of Kashmir.

### Ashoka

The Kashmiri Ashoka came to power in about 1182 B. C.. He conquered Kabul, Turkistan and some parts of India. He destroyed the Shaivite and the Naga temples and forced people to accept Buddhism. Accordingly, the valley was divided into many factions; some supporting the Shaivites and the others, the new religion, which the king had adopted after meeting a *bhikshu*. Ashoka, then took steps to do some good deeds and deputed monks to Turkistan, Tibet and China.<sup>22</sup> During his life time, Buddhism reached Ladakh and from that place spread into Tibet and China. He built the new capital of Kashmir and gave it the name of Srinagari, which had ninety-six lakh houses, resplendent with wealth.<sup>23</sup> Ashoka built Buddhist *stupas* at Hukalitar and Vethautur, in Badgham and Anarntnag. Most of the Buddhist relics, such as statues, have been found at Pandrathan. In the reign of Kashmir was over-run by the followers of Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and the Naga-worshippers. He is said to have permitted heretical beliefs to enter his realm from Central Asian countries.

### Anti-Buddhist Jalanka

Jalanka, who came to the throne after the death of Asoka, has been mentioned as the vanquisher of the Buddhists.<sup>24</sup> He was a rank communalist, who let loose a reign of terror on the Nagas and stormed their habitations. At the instance of Avadhuta, he took a vow to follow and worship Shiva. He persecuted the Buddhists and destroyed their *Viharas* and *stupas*. He patronised Shivaism and built Shiva temples on the Buddhist sites. Jalanka could not even tolerate the sound of the Buddhist

<sup>22</sup> Faug. M. D., *Mukamal Tarikhi-i-Kashmir*, p. 99.

<sup>23</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, I. 104.

<sup>24</sup> Kalhan., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, I. 112.

hymns. On the pretext that these disturbed his sleep, he got demolished many *viharas*. Persecution of the Buddhists could not subdue their spirits and they conspired to kill him.<sup>25</sup>

After having conquered many territories and having subjugated many nationalities, Jalauka started the work of consolidating his kingdom. He brought with him prisoners of war and made them settle in his kingdom. Probably, these were the Greeks, who built temples for him, in the Grecian style of architecture. He organised the state departments on the new pattern. Prior to his reign, there used to be only seven main officials of the State, namely the judge, the revenue authority, the treasurer, the commander of the army, the ambassador, the royal priest and the astrologer. But now, eighteen departments were organised and the affairs of the State progressed towards perfection. Jalauka established a strong agency for the collection of revenues. Having collected enormous wealth in the wars, he spent it in founding cities.

### Society

The people as well as the king, seems to be interested in religion. Four casts existed at the time in the society. Many ceremonies and rituals flourished at that time. Dancing was one of the most important recreation and the people and the priests sang hymns and songs. The king encouraged religious education, visited shrines and got built many temples. Believing that he possessed divine powers, Jalauka considered himself a god, who had descended on earth as on *avatara* to enjoy the pleasure of the world. When human society is divided into classes, slavery comes in and gives rise to beggary. The same thing happened during his reign.

The religious persecution which he started against the Buddhists, is also quite evident from the story given by Kalhana of a woman who admonished him on behalf of the Buddhists. The king modified his attitude and erected a Buddhist shrine at Kitshahom, near Baramulla. The Chinese travellers, who came to

<sup>25</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, I. 140-144.



Kashmir visted this stupa.

### **Damodara**

Jalauka, in his old age was forced to abdicate and a new figure, who was also a foreigner rose to power. He was Damodara, who belonged to some other family, as Kalhana puts it. He was not a Buddhist and as such, made alliances with the other non-Buddhist kings. He may be remembered for his works of public utility. He tried to construct a dam near Damodar *udur*, in order to bring water there for irrigation. In spite of his best efforts, he failed and this agony killed him. Kalhanas story that he died of a curse of the Brahmans and became a snake at Damodar *udur*, should not be taken as true in its literal meaning.<sup>26</sup> He died in about 150 B.C.

### **Shaivism**

The Brahmans are the worshipers of a Shiva, Vishnu and their *shaktis*. Mihirukula was a worshipper of Shiva and was a staunch enemy of the Buddhists. He not only devastated the Buddhists shrines but also killed several lakhs of the innocent Buddhists resulting in the anihilation of Buddhism from Kashmir. His work was completed by Harsha and due to these factors both the Buddhists and the Shaivits had to intermingle and Buddha was termed as an *avatara* of Vishnu, with the result that the separate entity of Buddhism vanished from the valley.

### **Turushka Kings**

The Yu-echi tribe rose to power in about 162 B.C. and drove out the foreigners, who had occupied the borders of China. They lived in the Kansu province, but their succes was short lived and their leader Chang-lun was defeated by Lau-shang. The Yu-echi tribe was vanquished and turned out of their home in the year 177 B.C. They fled towards Kashmir and occupied Afghistan and are known as the Kushans.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Kalhana., *Rajtarangini*, trans. Stein, I.165.

<sup>27</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. XVIII.



### Solomon's visit

It has been mentioned that Sandiman or Solomon came to Kashmir by air and rested on the top of Larjeet hills in Srinagar. This hills is known as *Takhat-i-Suliaman* or the Solomon's throne uptill now. He arranged removal of hinderences placed in the normal flow of the river Jhelum near Baramulla and saved the valley from submerging under water. Solomon is supposed to have entrusted the government of the valley to the three Trushka princes, Hushka Jushka and Kanishka.<sup>28</sup>

### Kushans

With the coming of the Kushans, Buddhism received a tremendous support. There is no denying the fact that during their rule, the Buddhists enjoyed royal patronage. Coins of Hushka or Huvishka and Kanishka have been located in Kashmir.<sup>29</sup> There is no such evidence in respect of Jushka, except that he built Juskpura or Zakur a large village near Srinagar. To Hushka, the building of Husukpura or Ushkur is attributed. Kanishka is supposed to have founded Kanishkapura, now known as Kanisapur.

### Kanishka

Kanishka came to power in about 40 A. D. His name lives in the legends of Kashmir, Tibet, China and Mangolia. His sway extended over a large empire including northern India, Afghanistan and Turkistan. The capital of his empire was Purushpora, the modern Peshawar. He is said to have conquered eastern India up to Banaras. The most important military exploit of Kanishka was his conquest of Kashmir, Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan. Kanishka is said to have changed his faith from time to time and these changes can be established from the study of his numerous coins. In the latter part of his reign, when Parsha becomes his religious preceptor, he became a Buddhist. By then, the Buddhist

<sup>28</sup> Fauq M.D., *Mukamal-Tarikhi, Kashmir*, p. 109.

<sup>29</sup> Hand book of S.P.S. Museum, Srinagar, pp. 131-132, 156.

influence had increased in Kashmir. The masses, who had felt disgusted with castes and narrowness of the Brahmanistic doctrines had become followers of Buddhism. Henceforth, Kashmir became the headquarters of Buddhism and the Kashmiri monks propagated this religion in Tibet, China and other countries.

### Patron of Buddhism

Kanishka founded the town of Kanispore, now village and then a big industrial and literary centre. Kanishka imported great artists from other lands to decorate his buildings and shrines. His coins have been found in different parts of India. Stray coins of Kanishka have been dug out in Scandinavia and Wales also. It was Kanishka, who restored Buddhism in his kingdom by giving it, his royal patronage. As such, his period is most important for the history of Buddhism in Kashmir, Gandhara and Central Asia. He built many *viharas*, *stupas* and other religious buildings. Further, lavish grants were made in favour of the monks. It was Kanishka, who decorated his coins with the name of *Boddo* or Buddha.<sup>30</sup>

### Fourth Council

According to the Buddhist tradition, Kanishka held the fourth Buddhist Council in Kashmir. He was advised by Parsva to summon all monks for collection of the sacred texts, and to prepare commentaries on the *Sutra*, the *Vinaya* and the *Abhidharma*. This Council was held at Kundalvana in Kashmir. It has been termed as *kien-tho-lo* in the Chinese geography. Besides the large audience, this Council was attended to by 500 *Arhats*, 500 *Bodhisattvas* and 500 *Panditas*.<sup>31</sup> Ashvaghosa, the celebrated author of the *Buddha-charita*, the *Saundrananda* and the *Sariputra-Prakarma*, attended this Council and commentaries of all the Buddhist texts were

<sup>30</sup> Kanishka gold coin; British museum, London, also Srinagar museum.

<sup>31</sup> *Tarananitha*, trans., Schiefner, also, *Chos-hbyun*. *Bu ston*. trans. Obermilier.



compiled into two treatises known as Upadesa-sastras.<sup>32</sup> The latter is known as *Kashmirshi* in the Chinese. It also goes to the credit of this Council, that for the first time in the history of Buddhism, freedom of thought and expression was recognised and it was declared that texts of all the 18 schools of thought in Buddhism were correct and all of them contained the word of the Master. Henceforth, Kashmir became the headquarters of Sarvastivadin school of Buddhism. These doctrines penetrated into Kabul, Kandhar, Central Asia and Tibet. Kanishka patronised such activities and even made a gift of Kashmir to the Sangha.<sup>33</sup> It has further been given by the Chinese sources that the final decisions of the Council were engraved on copper plates and deposited in a *Stupa*. Excavations done at Harwan, Ushkur and Ahan have revealed existence of the Buddhist relics but no traces of these copper plates have been found and this problem still engages the attention of scholars through out the world.<sup>34</sup>

### Naga-arjuna of Kashmir

Naga-arjuna is highly spoken off in the Buddhist literature. He is titled as *Boddhisattava* as also, the sole lord, of the land.<sup>35</sup> He is mentioned to have defeated the Shaivits in religious discussions. He lived at *Sadarhadvana* in Kashmir, which is known as Harwan these days. It was due to his knowledge that the Buddhists of Kashmir maintained their ascendancy over other *Acharyas*. He is also said to have denominated the Shaka era. Naga-arjuna's name has been very closely associated with the *Mahayana* and Kashmir. History records that the Buddhists suffered untold miseries during the reign of Abhimanyu. who gave royal patronage to Shaivism and the Buddhists were forced either to renounce their religion or face annihilation. Under such circumstances, many ran away towards the plains. Naga-arjuna had to flee from Kashmir and reached south India. In this way, his name began to be associated with.

<sup>32</sup> Hieun Tsiang's Travels in India.

<sup>33</sup> *Hieun Tsiang's travels in India*, trans. Watters.

<sup>34</sup> Excavations at Harwan were done by R.C. Kak, at Ushkur by Daya Ram Sahni and at Ahan by F. M. Hassnain.

<sup>35</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, I. 117.



Nagarjunakunda in the South. However, Nagar-arjuna's spring in a village, near the Hirapur hill in Shupiyan, Kashmir is known upto this day.<sup>36</sup>

### The Nagas of Kashmir

The Nagas were not serpents but were a predominant element in the population of Kashmir when Buddhism entered the valley. There is an old legend to the effect that it were the Nagas, who first accepted Buddhism. There is no doubt about the significance of the legend, despite the miraculous element in it, for in early Buddhist literature there are other references to the Nagas as paying homage to the Buddha.<sup>37</sup> Naga-arjuna is always referred to as a *Siddha* and so as Naga-Bodhi. Indeed, the Nagas and the Siddhas are often associated together in the ancient Indian tradition. This undoubtedly means that, besides Naga-arjuna and Naga-bodhi, there were many other Siddhas among the Naga people. One of them was Kapila, the reputed founder of the *Sankhya* system and he was in all likely hood, a Naga by race.

This should be evident also from Kapila's close association with Patanjali, who was unquestionably a Naga. This is the only meaning of the legend that Patanjali was the Shesha-naga incarnated, and composed not only the *Yoga-sutras*, but also the *Paramarthasara*, which is such a beautiful synthesis of the *Sankhya* and the *Vedanta*.<sup>38</sup>

This would account for Taxila having been such a famous seat of learning from quite early times. For Taxila must have been a city of the Nagas, like the neighbouring country of Kashmir, which had a large Naga population.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Fauq. M., *Mukamal Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, p. 114.

<sup>37</sup> *Gilgit Manuscripts*; V. I, pp. 5-6.

<sup>38</sup> *Kashmir Shaivism*; pp. 10-14.

<sup>39</sup> *Digha-nikaya*, V. II. p. 250.

## The Nagas of Taxila

Taxila thus became the cultural centre of Gandhara, with which Kashmir was so closely linked. In these circumstances, it is not at all unlikely that the Gandharaian Panini was also a Naga; equally as patanjali author of the great commentary on Panini's own work, was a Naga. It is in Gandhara again that, in an earlier age, the *Chahndogya-upnaishad* expounding the famous doctrine of *Tatatvam-asi* was composed.<sup>40</sup> All this shows how Gandhara had been a land of highest possible thought and science from every early times and there is no doubt that its population consisted mainly of the Nagas. Naga-sena who held those brilliant conversations on the Buddha's teachings with Milinda in Gandhara itself was a Naga by race. It is evident that the Nagas of Kashmir, too, being kith and kins of the Nagas of Gandhara and equally intelligents as the latter, so readily did accept the teaching of Buddha.

## Mahayana Philosophy

*Pratitya-samutpada* is the doctrine that the whole range of experience affecting us as happiness of misery, is nothing but a ceaseless succession, one after the other, of *Pratyayas*, that is to say, firm convictions. Even that which appears as the hardest of things is only a *pratyaya*.

The Mahayana Buddhism prevailing in Kashmir, developed such a profound philosophy so different from the Hinayana philosophy. Not only did the ancient Nagas of Kashmir readily understood and appreciated the very difficult teachings of the Buddha, but they influenced the later *Trika* philosophy of Kashmir.

In the *Trika*, *pratitya-samutpada* appears as the doctrine of *Unemesha* and *nirvana* as *parama Shiva*. Its state is spoken of not only as the most supremely general consciousness corresponding to what the Buddha speaks of as the consciousness which is realised in *nirvana*. It is described by the Buddha as

<sup>40</sup> *Chhandogya-Upnishadas*; 6. 8-14.



consciousness without a perceptible sign, infinite, with access everywhere. Buddha also graphically illustrates, in the story of Bank Brahma, who with all his power to conceal himself, could not keep himself away from the all-searching gaze, which is the consciousness of one, who has realised *nirvana*.

This is how, there is such an intimate connection between the original teachings of the Buddha, specially as embodied in the Mahayana, and what came to be revived later as the *Trika* in Kashmir.

### **Gilgit Manuscripts**

For a full and proper understanding of the spiritual and philosophical history of Kashmir, the study of the Gilgit Manuscripts, which represents the teaching of a section of the *Mahayna* along with other relevant material, is an indispensable necessity. It is only from Kashmir that the earliest manuscripts on Buddhist philosophy and religion have been discovered. This rearest find is know as the Gilgit manuscripts because thay were discovered at Gilgit in 1931. The story about these manuscripts is interesting. O' Kong has made mantion of 3 mountain routes to the Kashmir valley. One from Tou-fan (Tibet) the other from Polin (Baltistan) and the third from Kien-to-lo (Gandhara). The second road is perhaps the present Gilgit road and it is on this, that the Gilgit manuscripts were found in a stupa. There were two stupas, one on the hill side about 3 miles east of Gilgit and the other on the road to Nagar. On the rock at the mouth of Kirgah Aullah is carved the statue of Buddha. Some boys found a timber stick fixed on the top of an earth mound, They reported the matter to the Government which after excavations, found a circular chamber, in which was stored a wooden box full of manuscripts. In 1938, some more manuscripts were found in the 3rd stupa. It is interesting to note that these manuscripts were deposited there after some ritual and the names of the donors are given. Secondly, these manuscripts are parallel to those copied by Hieun Tsiang. It is proposed here to give further details about these manuscripts.

### Bhaishajya-gururanaparabha

One of the manuscripts recounts the story of Bhaishajya-gururanaparabha, who attained the status of *Boddhisatava* and still flourishes in a part of the universe known as *Vaidurya Nirbhasa*. It tells us how, before attaining Buddhahood, he had for achieving his end, made twelve mighty resolves, each of which is explained in some detail.

This discourse is given by Buddha at the request of Manjushri, who makes it, out of compassion for all ignorant and suffering beings who, on hearing the story, may correct their behaviour in its light and by the example of its hero, Bhaishajya-guru. The manuscript relates another instructive incident. A *Boddhisattva* tells the audience, as to how by worshipping Bhaishajya-guru even now, the soul of one who is dead, can be brought back to the body even from Yama's realm.<sup>41</sup>

### Tentric Texts

The next three texts in the first volume are concerned with the *Hridaya*, *Mantra-Padas* and the *Dharanis* of a Tantric type with directions for their use and various incidental stories and the last two texts are *Vyakaranas* or the expositions of history. One of these pertains to a goddess-like personality Mahadevi by name, residing in the heavenly world of Sukhavati. The other is about Ajitsena, a Raja of Magadha, and his son, who in the immediately preceding incarnation had been a poor girl in the city of Sharvasti. This girl once had the good fortune of receiving a visit from Buddha, who predicted how she would die in a week's time and would be born again as a princess and how that would be the past birth for her.

### Samadhiraja-Sutra

The second volume contains the text of the *Samadhiraja-sutra*. From the view-point of philosophic thinking and spiritual discipline, particularly superior *estatic*, concentration,

<sup>41</sup> Bhaishajya-guru-Sutra; pp, 24-25.



this text is the most important. As its name implies, it treats of what is regarded as the king of Samadhi, its philosophic basis and its consequence. The philosophic basis of the *Samadhi* is *samata*. Sameness, uniformity or which is the same thing when looked at from another point of view; *shunyata*, which is emptiness or voidity. The full name of this *samata* or *shunyata* is however, *Sarva-dharma-svabhava-shunyata*. It means that all phenomenal appearances, are in their essential nature just the same or just voidity. From this point of view, everything is a voidity and it is all like *maya* or a magical performance, and yet this voidity is neither born nor is subject to beath.<sup>42</sup> This *Shunyata*, which is the essence of all phenomenol experience is absolutely beyond all meanings. All things phenomenal, when known properly are seen to be beyond even all thought. It is the one indication and definition of all *dharma*s or phenomena which in themselves are devoid of all essential characteristics. By this one thing, the *Boddhisattava* known and sees everything.

Here the Buddha not only draws a clear distinction between the experience and the actual realisation, but he hold the latter as the final goal. How one is distinguished from the other is also indicated in the *Sutra*. The *shunyata* is the state of *Samadhi* where in the object of consciousness is not anything particular. In other words, as text itself tells us again, it is the state of *jati* or general idea which is only another way of saying *Samanya*. That is why, in this state, one not only comes to know perfectly and positively what *jati* is but becomes for ever a *Jati-smara*.

### **Jati-smara**

The state of a *Jati-smara*, is given as one of the essential attainments which a person has and must have on reaching *Samata Samadhi*.

Now *Jati-smara* usually means remembering one's previous births. But, as we can learn from various statements of

<sup>1</sup> *Samadhi-raja sutra*; 7.28.

Buddha, it is also the cognition, rather recognition of *jati* not merely in the sense of birth, but in that of general idea. And what happens when a person recovers the memory of his previous births is that he just makes his subconscious layer an object of vivid consciousness. This is done by *Yoga-Samādhi* and is spoken of by Patanjali actually as coming face to face with one's *Samskaras*. The recovery of the memory of previous births really means cognising, rather re-cognising in the sense of a general idea. It is only after recognising the general idea that a person comes to know again, remembers all the concrete details of which the general idea is an abstract synthesis. This process would be somewhat like the process, of directly hearing the sound waves of a piece of music, broadcast into and speeding through the ethereal space.

### Abinchaya Agatara

Whatever one does, whether by means of one's body, one's voice or one's mind, that becomes, *Saka* one's or own. Taking that if one departs hence, it becomes one's inevitable follower like a shadow which never leaves one. Not only does one thus recover the memory of one's own previous embodiments but also knows every *jati* and thereby every particular event. This happens in two ways. First as already indicated, when one general idea such as humanity, is known face in direct experience, then all particulars which are synthesized under that general idea, such as all particular human beings, are also known inevitably. Secondly, all particulars synthesised under each of them, are inevitably cognised by cognising face, what is called *para jati*, the supreme general idea or the summum genus.

Despite the fact that *Samata Samdhi*, in its absolute form, is this knowledge and vision of every thing else in the universe, yet it is voidity, because no general idea can ever be pictured in a sensuous form. The moment it is so pictured or visualised, it becomes a concrete form. The moment we try to picture, for instance, humanity, we begin to see particular human beings and all their concrete doings. This *Shunyata* is somewhat like the *Shunyata* of ethereal space, which is full of sound waves



such as are transformed into electric waves and broadcast into space, but can be re-translated as actual sounds of ordinary perception. The ultimate goal is *nirvana*, which though negative in name, is in truth the most positive.

Finally, the object of all this attainment is the good of the whole universe. This is repeatedly and clearly emphasised in these texts as in all genuine representations of the Buddha's teachings.

### **The Vinaya**

These texts contain different sections of the *Vinayavastu*, or discipline for the *Bhikshus*, and are simply unique. Unlike the *Vinaya* texts of other schools, these contain a number of stories of the *Ayadana* style. Apart from their import, these stories make delightful reading in very early prose writings in Sanskrit. These do throw much light on social customs, medical practices and geographical puzzles of ancient India.

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## King Ship

“Even the gods must die;  
Only Sovereign poetry remains stronger than death.”

.....Kalhana.

Buddhism was on its climax when Gonanda III came to the throne. Being a staunch enemy of this religion, he revived the old religious ceremonies among the people. Important changes were taking place, at that time, in the political, social and religious life of the people. The Pishachas had been subdued and the Nagas had gained ascendancy. Buddhism had suffered a serious set-back. Kings succeeded kings and thus Vibhisana I, Indrajit, Ravana and Vibhisana II continued their reigns one after the other. Nothing is known about the advancement of people in their regimes. Practically, they did nothing except enjoying the life of ease and luxury.



**Kashmiri scholars**

The accounts of the foreign travellers to the valley shows that Kashmir became a foremost seat of learning in the first century and attracted student and scholars from abroad. Some of the distinguished scholars from Kashmir visited foreign countries. Vimalamitra travelled in India to learn the mysteries of heterodox scriptures. Vairochana went to Khotan and introduced the Mahayana there. Kumarajiva went to China and succeeded in converting the king and the people to Buddhism.

He passed away in 413 A.D. in China. Gunarvarmana travelled to Java and succeeded in uprooting Hinduism there. Shama-batta, known as *Thumi-sambhota* in the Tibetan annals, was responsible for introducing Buddhism in Tibet.

Che-mong is perhaps the first scholar, who stayed in Kashmir for a few years, before his return to China in 424 A.D. Fa-yong also visited Kashmir for the study of the Sanskrit language. Consequently, the advent of foreign students and scholars influenced the art and culture of the Kashmiris.

**The Kashmir Nero**

A change, towards the worst for the Kashmiris came in the days of Nara, who was a debauch. He led a life of unchecked sensuality. During the reign of his ancestors, Buddhism had received a great blow and further persecutions had weakened its influence. Unfortunately, a Buddhist ascetic had seduced his queen and the king in anger, burnt down thousands of the Buddhist *viharas* and buildings. He followed a policy of fire and sword towards them and avenged fully. He confiscated their properties and houses, which he bestowed on the Brahmins<sup>1</sup>.

He founded a great market town of Narapura in Bijbihara and got it built artistically. The markets were kept full of

<sup>1</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, I. 199-200.

supplies. Gardens, parks and ponds were part of the town. Narapura and other towns found by him exist still.

### **Chandralekha**

A very interesting story of love and passion has been preserved for us by Kalhana. Once a Brahman named Visakha was sitting under a shady tree near a spring. As he was taking his porridge, there appeared two moon-faced maidens from a grove of creepers before him. He heard the sound of their foot rings. Their lotus eyes were fascinating. The poor young-man felt astonished and confused. He begged them to have some food which these maidens took with pleasure. The name of elder was Iravati and her younger sister was Chandralekha and they were the daughters of Naga Sushravasa. Iravati had been betrothed and Visakha fell in love, shoulders over head, with Chandralekha.

After 12 days, there was a great religious festival in which musicians, and players came to exhibit their art before the spectators. Visakha met the two maidens and their father, who had been informed about him by them. Sushravasa told him about the miseries of the people and begged for his help. He also told him about the cruel revenue officials and about the strict vigilance of the field-guards, who never allowed them even to touch the fresh crops cultivated by them. There upon, the young man decided to support these poor people. The field guards having been outwitted by the young man, the tillers of land carried away their harvest and were freed from the miseries. Visakha was bestowed with his love, Chandralekha, by her father. They both proceed to Narapura and began to enjoy honey-moon.

The king Nara, who ruled the country had heard about the beauty of Chandralekha. A wave of passion for her rose in his heart. He tried his best to obtain her but having failed to seduce her through peaceful devices, he sent his soldiers to capture Chandralekha. But the couple fled away for protection to their father's residence. A fierce battle started in which thousands of the Nagas and that King's soldiers took part. Blood



flowed in the river and thousands of the people were destroyed. The city of Narapura was burned down and the whole kingdom seemed to be in a red revolution. The actual scene of the destruction occurred on the banks of the Rembyar river in Shopiyan. Sushravasa, with his son-in-law and his daughters migrated to the sacred cave of Amareshvara and Nara perished through his evil conduct. The famous shrine of Vishnu Cakra-hara which had given asylum to thousands of people was also burnt down by the Nagas. This fascinating story tells us about the innocent hearts which Kashmiri's possessed and the human feeling which they cherished. The tyranny of the king and his field-guards is also of special interest as it shows that the kings did nothing for the welfare of their subjects. The cultivators were groaning under the collector's fierce paws. They suffered and groaned but had no guts to face the despot. This story also reveals that the only recreation and amusement for the people were the religious festivals, which were attended to by a large number of people. It is interesting to note that dancers, musicians and players exhibited their art before the spectators and the masses enjoyed these carnivals. Moreover, this story shows calm that the people groaning under the yoke of a despot, though for some time, rise and strike with success at the roots of the evil.

### **Holy abode of Shiva**

Since ancient times, the holy shrine of Amareshvara, known as the abode of Shiva in Kashmir is visited every year by pilgrims. It contains self formed ice *lingam*, which increases or or decreases with the waxing and waning of the moon. Mulla Ahmad, the translator of the *Ratna-Purna*, maker mentioned of the peak of Amarnatha. Its ancient existence is also mentioned by Kalhana, when he narrates the migration of Sushravasa-naga to the hill. Shiva and his consort Paravati, represent the faculties of will, knowledge and action in humanity.

The worship of *lingam* is associated with Shiva philosophy and is considered as a divine manifestation of the creative power of the god. According to Hassan, the cave is 12,000 feet long, situated in a long, glacial gorge high among the

eastern mountain of the Pir Panchal range. The *lingam* is formed from the ice drops and manifests itself in the sacred cave of Amarnatha.

### Herath

The festival connected with the marriage of Shiva with Paravati, is known as *Herath* among the Kashmiris. Its local character distinguishes it from the festival being observed outside Kashmir. It is connected here with the successful attempt of the Nagas in draining the valley out of water. *Herath* is a day of great feasting in Kashmir because, it signifies that the holy marriage was conducted in this lane of the Himalayas. Paravati, the daughter of the king of the Himalayas practised penance to achieve Shiva. At her *suyambhara*, all princes arrived to seek her hand. Shiva dressed as an ascetic and naked, came to the site. He had adorned himself with snakes, had smeared ash on his body, had a lion-skin tied around him, had garlanded his neck with skulls, had his trident and drum in his hand, and he came riding on his favourite bull. His companions were dressed as monsters. The king and the queen felt aggrieved and disliked the visitor. But, contrary to all expectations, Paravati came forward and put the garland of marriage in the neck of Shiva. All felt excited and disliked the marriage saying that Parvati had married a mad man. Shiva, then in ecstasy danced and the snow began to fall heavily. His *tandu* dance brought home and more snow; the mountains began to shake and earth seemed to turn up-side down. Shiva was then accepted as the husband of their daughter by her parents. All bowed and knelt before Shiva and Parvati. The mother and the father of all creation moved to their abode.

Since then, *Herath* or Shiva-ratri is being observed as a festival of great importance by the Kashmiris. On this auspicious occasion, special dishes are offered to the divine guests. The sacred cave of Amarnatha is the sacred abode of Shiva, most revered since ancient times. The three peaks, representing the three gods, overlook the cave.



**Space flights**

Nara's son Siddha when, he ascended the throne knew the fate of his father. He, therefore, led a pious life. He was a monk and a monarch combined and said to have ruled for nearly sixty years. He is credited to have ascended towards the sky. This is perhaps, the first legend preserved in the Kashmiri choronicles about space flight. The other radation relates to Solomon, who flew over the valley in a space-craft, which landed on the Gopa hill in Srinagar known as *Takhati-Sulaiman*. The old legend regarding the ascension of the king Pravara towards the sky has been preserved by Bilhana also, who says that he ascended bodily to heaven from the temple of Pravareshavara, which lies in the shrine of Bahu-ud-din, even at present. In the premises, there is a ruined gateway, build from huge stone blocks which is known as the gate-way to heaven. This place was the launching pad of the king on his last flight towards the sky.

**The Huns of Kashmir**

Kalhana has not given complete information apout the Hun rulers of Kashmir.

The white Huns are also known as the *Hiung-nu* or the Hunas. After having defeated the Yu-echi tribe, they moved towerds the west. At the beginning of the sixth century, they occupied Afghanistan and then moved into the north India. Under the leadership of Toramana, they succeeded in bringing down the edifice of the Gupta Empire. He succeeded in establishing the Hun Empire from Persia to the central India. Kalhana has mentioned Hiryanakula and Vasukula as the kings of Kashmir. According to him, Mihirakula was a son of Vasukula, but it is a historical fact that Mihirakula succeeded his father, Toramana as the king of the Huns. Coins of Toramana show the king standing in the royal dress, left arm on his hip and the right extended over an alter.<sup>2</sup> The reverse side of

<sup>2</sup> Kak R.C., *Handbook of the Archaeological and Numesmatic Sections of the S.P.S. Mussum, Srinagar*, P. 156.

the coins show the goddess Jaya, dressed elaborately. He was a sun-worshiper, like his fore-fathers.

### Mihirakula

Mihirakula, came to the throne of the Hun Empire in 515 A.D. He was one of the most powerful kings of the age and his name was a terror for the people. He has been represented as a blood thirsty tyrant, who took immense pleasure in the murder of human beings and even did not spare the old or the women. It is said about him, that having noticed his queen wearing a jacket made of cloth from Cylone with golden foot-prints marked on it, he got enraged and led an expedition for the conquest of Cylone. According to Hieun Tsiang, he was a staunch communalist, who persecuted the Buddhists and plundered their monasteries. In the Chinese annals, he has been represented as a fiends and not as a human beings.

Another story about him is that when an elephant fell down from over a precipice of Pir Panchal pass, he was overjoyed to witness this terrible sight. Such a beast he was, that he got all elephants rolled down by force from the precipice and enjoyed this frightful scene with immense enjoyment. The precipice is known as Hatvanj even now and it implies the place where elephants were destroyed.

The white Huns were sun-worshipers, who built many sun temples in the valley, including the sun temple of Martanda. They believed in various gods and goddesses; Jaya being prominent among the goddesses. Mihirakula having murdered three crores of women, young and old together with children could not save himself when people rose in rebellion against his tyranny.<sup>3</sup>

### Revolt

A brave Kashmiri, who after having collected numerous supporters, made an end of Mihirakula. Thus the Kashmiris,

<sup>3</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, Trans. Stein, I. 322.



got rid of a beast in a human shape. The people of Kashmir who had lived in turmoil, terror and lawlessness, during the reign of Mihirakula felt relieved after his death. And when Baka, his son came to the throne, they felt that peace had returned. The new king, built a few shrines, dug out a canal and founded a town. Nothing more is known about him except that he had sons and grandsons, whose number touched one hundred.

### Successors

Kisitinada, Vasunanda, Nara II, and Akas followed Baka. Vasunanda is said to have composed a book on erotics. The same old conditions prevailed in the reigns of these kings. A change came when Gapaditya ascend the throne of Kashmir.

He, followed a policy of toleration towards all castes and religions. A legend credits him with founding a few towns and shrines at Gopkar, Zethyar and other places. Certain reforms in the religious life of the people and in the Brahman church were introduced by him. He dismissed certain Brahman priests from posts, prohibited the killing of animals except for sacrifices and written religious hymns for recitation. The two kings, Gokarna and Khinkhla also called Narendarditya I, who followed did, nothing for the welfare of the people, who suffered more, when a despot in the name of Yudhisthira, became their ruler. He shunned the wise and mixed with the pleasure seekers, parasites and fools. Thus, he became a slave of his lust and gradually lost intellect. He would not come out of his seraglio and degraded his person in the eyes of his subject.<sup>4</sup>

### Age of Poetics

The contribution of the Kashmiris to the poetry is very great indeed and many such works have been traced by scholars. Chanrakad is one of the earliest poets, whose stray verses have been discovered from various works. He wrote on erotics. Mentha is another famous poet, who lived in the 5th century but

<sup>4</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangibi* trans. Stein, I. 315-367.

his works are not traceable. Later scholars have spoken very high of his elegant diction, emotional appeal and poetic imagery. He is also supposed to have either composed the life of Sri Rama or revised the earlier composition of the *Ramayana*.

### Extinction of Buddhism

It was Nara, who started the process, which resulted in the extinction of Buddhism in Kashmir. He got burnt down a large number of their viharas and uprooted the Buddhist population by confiscating their lands and bestowing these properties on Brahmins.<sup>5</sup> The Buddhists were also persecuted by the Hun rulers of Kashmir. What happened in Kashmir, was a part of similar process of elimination of the Buddhists from the country.<sup>6</sup> In the struggle between the followers of Brahmanism and Buddhism, the former was victorious. Under such circumstances, extinction of Buddhism from Kashmir was a question of time.

The affairs of the Kingdom fell into disorder and the officers of the State, let loose, indulged in every sort of cruelty. The poor people suffered and perished. Intrigues and conspiracies began to be hatched in the royal court and outside. Some of the leading courtiers conspired to throw off the king. They, one day led their forces into the king's palace. After much blood-shed, the king fled away, carrying with him his treasure and women. The rebels pursued him, on the way and carried off repeatedly young women of his household, his treasures and other possessions. He was captured and murdered at Drugjan, near Srinagar by the conspirators. Thus came to an end the rule of this despot.

### Loss of Independance

The contending parties invited a foreigner named Pratapaditya, to be their monarch. Kalhana has wrongly connected

<sup>5</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, I. 200.

<sup>6</sup> Dutt R.C., *A note on Kalhana's Rajatarangini* Calcutta Review. 1880.



him with Vikramaditya. Even, in his reign, peace never dawned in the country. Dissensions continued, which his son Jaluka could not subdue. The people were divided, suffering with such dissensions and other calamities which followed one after the other. Though they had invited a foreigner to rule over them, yet their sufferings had not lessened. The end of the Hun dynasty was a matter of time. The new monarch Tunjina and his queen Vakpusta tried to reduce the suffering of their subjects. Two towns were built and religious activities were patronised. Shady trees were planted on both sides of the roads and the people began to develop agriculture. They also took interest in literary activities.

### The Great Famine

But the days of these literary, cultural and social activities were numbered. A heavy snow fall at the time of harvest resulted in the destruction of the rice crop. This resulted in a great famine in which the masses began to starve. Kalhana says that tormented by hunger, every one thought only of his belly and forgot love for wife, affection for children and regard for parents. The starving masses behaved like ghosts and fought like vultures for food. The king and his queen did everything to relieve the people from suffering. The treasury of the state was exhausted on the purchase of food from other lands and the starving people were supplied with free rations. But all these efforts failed to relieve the distress caused by the famine. As the routes leading to neighbouring kingdoms were also covered with snow, not much food could be imported into the valley. The king and his queen became distressed over this helplessness. They felt remorse and even thought of committing suicide. The famine passed away after taking a heavy toll of the people. The royal couple died childless and the queen committed *sati*.

The next king Vijaya, who ruled for eight years deserves no credit, for he did nothing for his subjects. Then another wicked king came to power, whose name was Jayendra. The punishment inflicted by him over his ministers must be noted. The officers could be dismissed, their properties confiscated and

they could be sent to the prison. Fetters and chains were also used in those days. Executions were also resumed and in some cases, convicts were burned alive in fire and their dead bodies were also thrown before wolves.

Much is not known about the social life of the people except, that they lived in the same fabric of society. The same age-old institutions continued together with traditional religious beliefs, activities and festivals. Camphor and other incense was used for fragrance besides ointments, Drinks were also in vogue.

### Election of a King

A great constitutional change occurred with the coming of a new king, who was elected by the people. He might have been elected mostly by the upper classes but in spite of all this, such a healthy trend in the political affairs and such a move towards democracy, must be acknowledged with praise. Most of the miseries of the people were mitigated by the accession of the Arya-raja Samdhimat, who became the ruler with their consent. The new king had a great court which included, wisemen, ascetics and brave. He was a spiritualist and so, in his reign spiritual activities were given royal patronage. Religious endowments were granted, temples and shrines were constructed, under his orders. Isbar, near Nishatbagh and the shrines of Theda and Brane were founded by him. He himself participated in religious festivals, in company of the ascetics, He cared much for spiritual attainments rather than for material objects. Thus, he could not look after the affairs of his kingdom. The people seem to have felt dissatisfied with his rule. This discontentment later resulted in a revolt, in which he was put on the stake.<sup>7</sup> This extraordinary event deserves attention because this is the only instance in the history of Kashmir, nay India, where crucifixion of Jesus Christ is repeated. Isana, the famous saint lived on the banks of the Dal lake near Srinagar. He was a great saint and the king became his disciple. When Samdhimat was put on the cross, the great Isana came and saw three sentences projected on the forehead of the prisoner:

<sup>7</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, II. 79.



This man will lead an austere life;  
 He will be put on the stake;  
 After resurrection he shall;  
 Be the king.<sup>8</sup>

On the third day, Samdhimat came to life and was again invited to kingship but he refused. People again began their search for a new king. The idea of searching a king from among their own people never appealed to them and their eyes again turned towards a foreigner. Their was a brave prince named Meghavahana, who according to them had all the qualities needed for a sovereign. Samdhimat was forced to abdicate by the people of Kashmir. He became a hermit and lived in the Bumzo cave. Thus, for the first time, in the history of Kashmir, the subjects compelled their king to voluntary abdication. This was a great constitutional victory, which asserted their rights of the people. It is indeed a strange coincidence that the dates of Samdhimat and Christ are almost identical and both the personalities have strong resemblances.<sup>9</sup>

### Meghavahana

Meghavahana, who ascended the throne of Kashmir in 438 A.D. was a Buddhist. He tried to revive the dying faith. He and his queens built many *viharas* for the benefit of foreign *bikshus*.

The main *viharas* were built at Vicharnag, Narvor, and Khadanyar in Kashmir. Famous among these was Amritabhavana which was got built by the queen Amritaprabha. Oukong has mentioned this *vihara* by the name of Ngo-mi-to-powan.<sup>10</sup> This place is known as Antabhawan now and lies in the vicinity of Vicharnag, Srinagar. As the queen was a Ladakhi lady and her guru was also a *Stunpa* from Ladakh, she dedicated this *vihara* to Amitaya, the giver of long life. It further transpires that the Mahayana had swayed both Ladakh and

<sup>8</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, II. 90.

<sup>9</sup> Sufi G.M.D., *Kashir*, V. I, p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Notes on Oukong. Stein, See *Rajatarangini*, V. II, p. 457.

Kashmir during that period. Many legends have been connected with the name of Meghavahana, showing his kind and beneficent bent of mind. He is credited with having subjugated northern India and in this connection, Kalhana relates the expeditions led by the king against the kings of Marwar, Sind and Cylone.

### A Monk Morarach

A philosopher king, in the name of Vinayaditya has been mentioned to have come to power in the sixth century. His name shines in history as a moral reformer. He was a saint and a monarach, combined in one personality. He is said to have accepted the throne of the kingdom from his subjects after making them accept certain conditions. Some of the conditions were that none should kill any living being or deceive others or commit bad acts. The king lived in a hut at the foot of the hill on the banks of the Dal lake. He led a very simple life and earning his livelihood by cultivating a piece of land. He helped the needy and was honest in his dealings with the people. Some scholars have stated that the prophet of Islam sent his two ambassadors to meet the king.

### Military Autocracy

During the second half of the sixth century, Kashmir came under the new military autocracy of Pravarasena, who is said to have marched his army into Kashmir after the fall of Matri-gupta. The new king was a military adventurer, who aspired fame, glory and renown through conquests.

Pravarasena, in order to achieve this aim started his reign with the detachment of military expeditions for conquests. His raids included some of the northern portions of the Punjab, the Ganga-Jamna plain and Gujarat.<sup>11</sup> According to Kalhana, his army, uprooted the inhabitants of Surastra. Pravarasena repulsed the invasion of Mummuni the muslim chief Turkstan

<sup>11</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, III. 324-331.



and accumulated great treasures.<sup>12</sup> A new capital was founded by him and given the name of Pravarasena, a fact corroborated by the Annals of the T'ang dynasty. A bridge was also constructed over the river *Vitasta* near Maisuma. The practice of constructing boat bridges was started during his reign. Moreover, a huge statue of the Buddha was erected on the bank of the river, in a *vihara* mentioned by Hieun Tsiang by the name of *Che-ye-n-to-lo*.<sup>13</sup> This *vihara* was burnt down and this statue was melted down by the king Ksemagupta for construction of a temple dedicated to Shiva.<sup>14</sup>

### City and Society

Kalhana's account of the new city is interesting but exaggerated. The number of the houses in the city have been estimated at 36 lakhs by him. This famous city had regularly arranged markets and temples of five goddesses. According to Hieun Tsiang, Buddhist pilgrims received instructions in various convents especially in the *vihara* of *Che-ye-n-to-lo*. Big mansions were constructed on the right bank of the river and there existed other pleasure resorts in the city.

The king obtained support from the upper classes and especially from the Brahmans. Their support was sought for by the kings, for, they could give religious sanction to the royal actions. Thus, the kings, in order to make the Brahmans participants in the royal power, allowed them many concessions. They were a force to reckon with, for they were the king-makers.

### Ranaditya

Another cruel autocrat ascended to the throne in the name of Ranaditya, whose 'sword descended on the forests of his enemies' necks, causing streams of water in the eyes of their

<sup>12</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, III. 332-335.

The muslims had reached the northern borders of Afghanistan by 656 A.D.

<sup>13</sup> The life of Hieun Tsiang., S, Hwui-Li, p. 69.

<sup>14</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VI. 172-173.

women and there danced none but headless corpses.<sup>15</sup> In spite of his cruel exploits, he sometimes diverted his attention towards works of public utility. Kalhana credits him with having established, few temples and a hospital. He was succeeded by Baladitya, another military leader, who was the last of the Gonanda family. He was also a powerful autocrat who subdued other kings and nationalities. Much is not known about him and his subjects. The people of Kashmir seem to have followed the same life as they had done in previous reigns. No great progress seems to have been made in the domain of art and culture.

### Durlabhadeva

Coins bearing the name of Durlabhadeva have been found in Kashmir.<sup>16</sup> Much is not known about his early life except that, he started his career as a menial in the royal stable. By his cleverness, diplomacy and merit, he rose to high post of a minister. The king gave his daughter, Anangalekha in marriage to him. She was a debauchee and had illicit relations with the minister, Khankha. He would conduct himself with her in the seraglio as it pleased him and Durlabhadeva would shut his eyes over her indecent tricks.<sup>17</sup> This very minister Khankha, removed all obstacles in the way of Durlabhadeva, who became the ruler of Kashmir, after the death of his father-in-law. Hiuen Tsiang, came to Kashmir via Hushkapura, the modern Ushkur and made remarkable enquiries about the country and its people. He stayed for two years in a Buddhist convent, absorbed in study and writing.<sup>18</sup> He mentions Kashmir as the kingdom of *Kia-shi-mi-lo*. He says that "the people are not given to faith and the temples of the heretics are their sole thought." According to him, "the people are weak, pusillanimous and cunning." Hiuen Tsiang left the valley through the Toshamaidan route. He was followed by Ou-Kong, whose account of Kashmir is

<sup>15</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, III, 388-390.

<sup>16</sup> Kak R.C., *Handbook of the Archaeological and Numismatic Sections of the SPS Museum, Srinagar*, p. 133.

<sup>17</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, III, 497-523.

<sup>18</sup> *Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, trans. Beal, p. 68.



more detailed. He came to Kashmir in 759 A.D. and stayed for 4 years.<sup>19</sup> It may be recorded that the first clear reference to Kashmir, is contained in the classical literature of the Greeks, Ptolemy has mentioned the region held by the *Kaspeirans* as *Kaspeiria*. In the Chinese records, the valley of Kashmir and its surrounding territories have been fully described. The first T'ang dynasty, dates back to 541 A.D. Hieun Tsiang visited Kashmir, ninety years after the date of this notice. The next Chinese notice of Kashmir is contained in the records of the T'ang dynasty of the year 713 A.D. The next important visitor was Ou-Kong, who has described three hundred Buddhist shrines of Kashmir. His description of the boundaries and the routes is very valuable. The Chinese pilgrims continued to travel through Kashmir even after Ou-Kong, but records thereof are still concealed.

The next few kings who followed, were benevolent monarchs, because they tried their best to administer the country with an ideal of sincere benevolence. They helped the people in distress, protected them against injustices and ruled according to their best judgement and traditions. The chronology of these kings is subject to controversy, because Kalhana has not given their dates of accession. The length of their reigns is also contradictory to the entries in the Chinese records. Hence we have to follow the chronology as given in the annuals of the T'ang dynasty.

Pratapaditya II ascended the throne in 630 A.D. He is credited with having founded the town of Tapar, 22 miles west of Srinagar, where he built many spacious temples and mansions. Excavations have brought to light foundations of a Buddhist *vihara* made of huge stone slabs. The whole area is full of sculptures. Metal detectors have revealed that there are deposits of metal other than iron under the entrance gate.

### **Chandrapida**

Chandrapida, who ascended the throne in 711 A.D. has

<sup>19</sup> L Itinerary of Ou-Kong, *Journal Asiatique*, 1985.

been identified with *Chen-to-lo-po-li* in the Chinese records. We learn from the annals of the T'ang dynasty, that the king of Kashmir asked for the aid of the Chinese against the Arabs, who had made raids in the north-western region of India. We further learn that Chandrapida was granted the title of king by the Chinese emperor.<sup>20</sup> He is credited with having codified the law, which the other kings had left incomplete. He was the benefactor of his subjects and introduced a better system of administration in his dominion. His reign is known for justice, peace and prosperity. The king and the queen interested themselves in the construction of *vikharas* and temples. The construction of Tribhuvana-swamin, has been attributed to him. The people seem to have attained a legal mind as is evident from the story of a leather tanner, who had refused to give-up his hut for the site of a temple. While asserting his right of private property and personal honour, he boldly told the king. "I am not as low as a dog is and my hut is a palace for me". Hunger strikes were also observed in those days, and such hunger strikes were used as a weapon for political ascendancy and coercion.

### Lalitaditya the Great

Lalitaditya Muktapida ascended the throne in 724 A.D. He is known in history as a great king who brought glory and honour to the Kashmiris. He ushered a new era of prosperity in the realm. He has been mentioned in the Chinese the Turkish and the Tibetan legends as a great conqueror. In the Chinese annals, he is known as Mu-ti-pi, the king of Kashmir who sent an embassy to the Chinese court between 736-747 A.D.

Being eager like Alexander for new conquests, he set out on new expeditions every now and then.<sup>21</sup> After having subjugated the Punjab, he invaded the kingdom of Kanauj which had acquired importance during the reign of its ruler, Yasovarmana. Both the kings entered into an alliance and a treaty of friendship was drawn accordingly. Mitrasarman, the foreign

<sup>20</sup> Klaproth., *Memoires relatifs a L'Asie*, II, p. 275.

<sup>21</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, IV. 131.



Minister of Lalitaditya picked up a quarrel with Yasovarmana, which resulted in complete uprooting of the Kanauj army at the hands of the Kashmiris. Kanauj was annexed and by this conquest, Lalitaditya became the sovereign on north-western India.

This success created a desire in the king's heart for world conquest, which could not be allayed. According to Kalhana, the king then led an expedition for the conquest of Kalinga. The Kashmiri army had now equipped itself with a large number of elephants. Having conquered Kalinga, the king marched further and the king Javitagupta of Bihar and Bengal, was also defeated. From there, they advanced into the territory of Karnataka, which was ruled over by a benevolent queen named Ratta. She submitted and got protection and with her connivance, he marched towards the west. Gujarat was occupied and the Kashmiris then entered into the city of Dwarika.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the empire of Lalitaditya became the most powerful empire since the days of the Guptas.

### Conqueror of Hindustan

But the Kashmiris became uneasy at prolonged haltage and decided to march back. The king admonished them to strictly observe discipline. However, the king turned his attention towards the eastern parts of Afghanistan. Cities after cities fell and the people fled away to the mountains. Now, he came, face to face, with the Caliphate of Islam, which had extended to the borders of Afghanistan by then.

While the Arabs were making efforts to advance towards Kabul, Lalitaditya got an easy opportunity to extend his sway toward the Indus. After having defeated the Shahis of Kabul, the king made his homeward march from Gilgit. Daradistan was completely over-run and occupied. Kalhana remarks, that the king did not tolerate the continuous drinking of wine by the Darads and their other sensual habits.<sup>23</sup> After having subdued them, he conquered some regions towards the north of Kashmir

<sup>22</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, IV. 160.

<sup>23</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, IV. 169.

especially some parts of Ladakh.

### National Glory

Through these conquests, Lalitaditya collected many treasures. He had subdued Orissa, Bengal, Decan, the Punjab, Afghanistan, Daradistan, Ladakh, Tibet and some territory in Central Asia. Many kings submitted and accepted Lalitaditya as their emperor. He got from Maghada a huge statue of Buddha, for installation in his capital. It is clear, that Kashmir commended the respect of many kingdoms of the south as well as of the north and the Kashmiris were fortunate enough to find a great leader, to lead them on the path of national glory.

The emperor granted *jagirs* to his dependant kings. The vanquished rulers and the subjugated people were ordered to adopt various characteristic marks by which their defeat at the hands of the Kashmiris could be indicated. With the passage of time, these characteristics became their habits. Some of the subjugated people were ordered to save half of their head. Such other marks of bondage were forced upon the vanquished. Still, his attitude towards the vanquished people was magnanimous and munificent.

### Parihasapura

Lalitaditya was a great builder and a patron of arts and culture. He created an environment, in which a movement of founding of big and small Buddhist and Shaivist temples was manifested. A number of Shrines, temples, cities were built by him. Pruntus, Latpore, Shadipore and numerous other towns were founded by him, but his other towns cannot be traced now. Religious endowments were granted for maintenance of the Shrines. Huge statues were erected at different places. The grand *viharas* at Parihasapura, in Kashmir were dedicated to Buddha. Here stood the three conventional huge structures, a temple, a monastery and a stupa, built of massive stones. The edifice was surrounded by a city. The emperor got erected a colossal statue of Buddha in copper, in the main stupa. It is a pity that Shankaravarmana burnt down the city of Parihasa-



pura and got demolished these Buddhist *vihas* and the material was used by him for construction of temples dedicated to Shiva at Pattan.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Harsha stole away all the statues and got them melted in order to fill in his treasury.<sup>25</sup>

The ancient site at Parihaspuna is of great historical and archaeological interest. Prior to the building of a new capital here by Lalitaditya, it was Buddhist site, where existed the royal *vihas* constructed during the Kushana period. It is an ancient megalith site, and the plateau was habitated by the cave-dwellers of Machihom, which lies adjacent to Devar. The site served as the launching pad of space-crafts by the pre-historic people. According to Kalhana, Lalitaditya built the four Shrines as *Vishnu Parihasa-kashava*, *Mukta-Kasheva*, *Mahavaraha* and *Govardhanadharam* here. He also built the famous *Raja-vihara* and installed a colossal image of Buddha at the site. But the site suggests that it has remained as such since prehistoric times and the king utilised the megaliths available, for his edifices. At present, the foundation of five ruins are available at the site. It is probable that the records of the fourth Buddhist Council, held during the region of Kanishka are buried here under the huge megalith in the centre of *stupa* towards the south. Lalitaditya patronised Buddhism and built a monastery at Ushkar, which has been partly excavated now. Here, he built a large *vihas*, with a *stupa*. He also built a Vishnu temple for the Hindus, which was quite separate from the Buddhist establishment. Ou-Kong, who reached Kashmir in 750 A.D. from Gandhara, spent four years in this monastery. According to Kalhana, Harsha destroyed those Buddhist, monuments ruthlessly, despite wailings of the Buddhists, who entreated him to spare the gods from his wrath.<sup>26</sup>

### **Martanda**

Lalitaditya got reconstructed on the old foundations, the famous shrine of the sun at Martand. Its position is superb

<sup>24</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, V. 156-162.

<sup>25</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 1091-1098.

<sup>26</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. VII. 1097.

and it rests on a plateau overlooking the valley. Perhaps, it is one of the most striking monuments of the Kashmiri architecture. Its spacious courtyard is enclosed with colossal stone pillars raised at different points. During his reign, gold, silver and copper statues made by the Buddhist craftsmen were put in these shrines. His example was followed by the queen, his ministers and officials. The emperor did not ignore the works of public utility and during his reign many irrigation works were completed. The Sun temple of Martanda appears to have been remodelled at different periods. It was initially constructed by the Greeks of Kashmir and was later renovated by the Kushanas and also by the Hun ruler, Mihirakula. It was again remodelled by Ranaditya and finally reconstructed by Lalitaditya. Its three plinths have come to the light, uptill now and its walls appear to have been remodelled or strengthened several times by refixing of stone slabs, thus hiding the inner mural decorations. Its courtyard has also been enlarged and shortened from time to time. The shrine has remained Jewish, Zoroastrian, Buddhist and Shaivite from time to time and its composition and character represents a composed and mixed culture which is Jewish, Greek and Hindu at the same time. Metal detectors show abundance of metal beneath it with a band of radio-active waves. The place is a megalithic site of pre-historic times and might have been used as a launching pad by the ancient astronauts.<sup>27</sup>

### Administration

The emperor was the over-lord of princes, a petty god for the people and a terror for other kings. The administrative machinery of the empire was divided into 23 departments, each under a minister. Some of the important offices, were the office of the High Chamberlain, the Chief Minister of the Foreign Affairs, Chief Master of the Household, High Keeper of Treasury, and that of the Chief Executive Officer.<sup>28</sup> These offices were held by princes and members of the aristocratic families. According to Kalhana, orders of the emperor were carried out

<sup>27</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans, Stein, IV. 142-143.

<sup>28</sup> For further studies, see works by Eric Von Daniken.



by the officials and not a single order was disobeyed, 'even by the gods'. His army consisted of one lakh and fifty thousand soldiers. It was equipped with a large number of elephants and horses etc.

### Beacon light

Lalitaditya imported talented and efficient men from other countries for administrative purposes. Jayanta Bhata, the author of *Nayanamonjri* is considered the foremost writer of the period. Beggary existed and 100,000 persons were fed on charity and dancing girls were kept in the temples. Even though, the emperor did not like drinks, he did not order prohibition in his empire and when intoxicated the emperor committed acts of terrible wickedness. Once, when he was intoxicated, he gave orders that the city of Pravarapura be burnt down and this order was not obeyed and instead they set on fire ricks of grass. He also got assassinated the king of Bengal by treachery. Al-Beruni makes mention of Lalitaditya a great king. He lost his life in one of his distant expeditions in the north and according to one version perished through excessive snow while proceeding towards Iran.<sup>29</sup> To the Kashmiris of later periods, Lalitaditya was a hero and his glorious reign has served as a beacon light to them in many a depressing days. In fact, he can be ranked among the greatest sons of Kashmir.

### Nilamata-purana

The *Nilamata-purana* is a legendary source of information about the origin of Kashmir and its authorship has been ascribed to Nila-naga. In its present form, it appears to be the work of the 8th century because Buddha is mentioned in it as an avatara of Vishnu and this assimilation of Buddhism into Hinduism took place in the 7th century. It is possible that the work might have been written, at the time the valley was drained out of water and these interpolations might have been done in the later periods. However, information provided in it about the *tirthas* is very valuable.

<sup>29</sup> *Aryanaka* may be the Ariana of the Greeks.

The legend about the creation of Kashmir indicates that Ananta drained off the water from the valley, which was a vast lake. It then tells us about the fight between the Nagas and the clan of Jaladhbava, who had invaded the neighbouring countries including Gandhara. The *Nilamata* also provides information about the rites prescribed for the inhabitants permitted to reside in the valley.

### Age of learning

Kings followed kings, who brought nothing but sufferings for the people. Anarchy prevailed in the country. Ou-Kong says that 'legitimate successors were either butchered or thrown alive in pits. There was no settled monarchy and the powerful person was the master of the game. Everywhere was chaos and confusion'. But after this unsteady rule of the weak kings, Jayapida came to the power in 751 A.D. He was ambitious, like his grandfather, Lalitaditya. He also marched with his forces for conquest but during his absence, his throne was usurped by Jajja. The king had to return, which resulted in a fierce battle near Sukhlitara. Most of the villagers fought on his behalf and he succeeded in over-throwing the usurper.

The king, now thought reforming the administration. He founded the new capital of Jayapura near Andarkot.<sup>30</sup> A new literacy movement was started in his reign. Learning and study was encouraged and he collected scholars from distant lands and elevated them to important posts. He patronised their literary activities. The king appointed a poet named Damodaragupta, the author of *Kuttinimate*, as his chief councillor. Vamana Bhara, his minister wrote a commentary on grammar entitled *Kavyalamkaravrtti*. The king himself composed verses. He patronised the famous scholar, Bhatta Udghatta, the author of *Alamkarasatra*. Ksiravamin wrote a commentary on *Amarkosa*. Scholars like Sankhadanta Catanka, Tohakkia and others received his patronage. Andarkot, flourished as the capital of Jiyapida, who built two other towns near it, namely Jayapura and Dvaranvati. He also got erected

<sup>30</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans, Stein, IV. 506-511.



three huge statues of Buddha in the main town. Envoys were sent to other states. He appointed Muslims soldiers as his body-guards at night.<sup>31</sup>

The king reorganised the judicial system in his domain. He also introduced the system of moving treasury from place to place and coins were struck, as and when required. These coins bear the name of *Viraditya* and are of mixed metal. The next twenty years were, the years of great misfortune for the people. Kings who followed brought nothing but misery to the people. The country fell into disorder. Merchants, officials and princes set-up their own petty principalities. As the whole country was in flames, Avanti-varman was made the king of Kashmir by the powerful nobles in 855 A.D. His succession open up a new era in the political history of ancient Kashmir. The coming of Avantivarman also makes the advent of Shaivism in Kashmir. Henceforth, Shaivism received royal patronage and Buddhism got extinct from the valley.

<sup>31</sup> *Mumuni* in *Rajatarangini* IV, 516, may mean Muslim mercenaries from Badakhshan.

### III

## Sun Rise

This universe is nothing but a manifestation of His Shakti;  
Yet "Parma Shiva remains the over transcendent Chaitanya."

—Para-Pravesika.

The Nagas and the Pishachas are the earliest inhabitants of the valley, The former were better civilised than the later, who claimed their descent from the ancient lord of the lake, which got drained due to geological eruptions near Baramulla and formation of the river Jehlum. The primitive tribes followed primitive types of worship such as snake worship. Such concepts are purely Kashmirian in origin and these represent creative powers of nature. With the passage of time, these creative powers were substituted with Shiva and Shakti. The Nagas believed in these prehistoric indigenous cults and rites, which have continued since thousands of years and are practised even at present. Some of these are *Gada-bhata*, *Khecher-amavas* and *Chatur-dashi*, and other ancient ceremonies, where offerings are



made to Shiva and Shakti.

With the passage of time, the Kashmiris developed philosophical literature of their own on Shiva cult, and their original thoughts attracted many scholars from other lands. But the position reversed with the advent of Buddhist doctrines into the valley. Some time, in the first century B.C. the Kashmiris, not only gladly accepted Buddhism but gave it a new interpretation, which later developed into the flower of the *Mahayana*. This school of thought, was developed and introduced into Central Asia, Tibet and China and other lands by the Kashmiris.

But from the 9th century onwards, the Brahmanic cult 'became ascendent putting into shade the Buddhist religion till the reign of Ksemagupta, who burnt the Buddhist *viharas* and utilised the images for other purposes. From now on till the 11th century, the Buddhist fell on evil days and all the kings were anti-Buddhistic in spirit.<sup>1</sup> The latter had to eat the humble pie.<sup>2</sup> The astute Brahman lost no opportunity in providing a more palatable alternative to Buddhistic tenants, which may well be called the seeds of Shaivism, which sprouted forth in full bloom later.<sup>3</sup>

### Advent of Shiva-Sutras

The *Sutras* are believed to be the work of Shiva himself and these therefore, form part of the *Agama Shastra*. According to one ancient tradition recorded by Kashmaraja, the *Sutras* were found by Vesugupta, inscribed on a rock at the foot of the Mahadeva mountain. According to the same tradition, Vasugupta had been told of the rock and the inscription thereon, by Shiva himself in a dream.

There had been prevailing at the time two mutually conflicting systems of thought. One of them was that of the Buddhist teacher Naga-Bodhi and his followers, representing the school of

<sup>1</sup> Nalinaksha Dutta, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, V. I, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Dhar. K.N., *Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Dhar. K.N., *Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture*, p. 13.

philosophy, which was characterised as 'repellers of *Atman* and *Ishvara*', by the Brahmins.

The other was the dualistic system, holding man and *Ishvara* as eternally different from each other. In these circumstances, there was the great risk of the monistic mysteries of Shiva, disappearing altogether from the world. This state of affairs distressed Vasugupta much but he was relieved of his distress when Shiva, revealed to Vasugupta the whereabouts of the *Shiva-Sutras*. Vasugupta copied out and after mastering these nicely, taught them to his disciples, Kalita and Toher. This bit of traditional information is of great value in understanding both the purpose as well as the nature of the *Shiva-Sutras*. They arose as a protest, first, against certain later schools of Buddhism, preaching the nihilistic doctrines; secondly their protest was against the doctrine of dualism in any and every form. The very first *Sutra*, so emphatically declares that not only the *Atman* is man's consciousness in its essential and general form but is, in itself the *Atman*.

### Practical Philosophy

While the *Shiva-Sutras* thus began with a highly philosophical declaration, the work is not just a theoretical system of philosophy. On the contrary, it is a wonderful practical treatise, telling its serious students how to realise the positive experience. Of all the humanistic achievements of Kashmir, the *Trika* is unquestionably the greatest. It is of world-wide interest, for it is Kashmir's very own and in the words of a Kashmirian author, like saffron, which grows nowhere else except in Kashmir. The *Trika* is a wonderful synthesis of all the important systems of knowledge and thinking as well as all moral and spiritual disciplines practised previously in India. It is the synthesis of all that is universal and enduring in the *Vedanta*, the *Sankhya*, the *Dharma* and the *Vinaya* as well as all that is highest and noblest in the *Vaishnava* and the *Shakta* schools of thought.

While synthesising all previous system of India's philosophic thinking and spiritual discipline, the *Trika* has been careful to avoid the many pitfalls, into which certain later representations



of the earlier systems have been led. The *Trika* is completely free from all negativism.

Then again, while absolutely monistic in its analysis of man and the universe, the *Trika* is yet a most realistic and dynamic system. In it, the chief emphasis is laid on what is called *Svatantrya*, the most complete autonomy of thought and action as the goal of life. The *Trika* is an opportune revelation designed to meet and solve the many intricate problems, personal and social, which confront the man all over the world.

### Science of Humanism

The *Trika* is the fundamental science of three most vital facts of universal experience, namely, (a) man, (b) universe and (c) adjustment. While all these three are dealt with in the *Trika*, it is the man who is its primal as well as final concern, so much so that the *Trika Shastra* might as well be called the science of humanism. The *Trika* does not just stop here, but analysis man's entire construction; physical, mental and spiritual. In addition to the analysis, not only of man but, also his universe into thirty-six principles, the *Trika* further tells us, with a wonderful wealth of detail, the exact method of knowing them in direct experience and realising them as positive facts.

The *Trika* is meant for all human beings without any distinction of sex, creed, caste or colour.

### Three Divisions

The *Trika* has a very extensive literature, consisting of three different divisions, namely (a) the *Agama Shastra*, (b) the *Spanda Shastra* and (c) the *Pratyabhijna Shastra*.<sup>4</sup> The *Agama* literally means 'what has come down from remote antiquity! The *Spanda* literally means energy and it has reference to the fact that the whole universe in all its aspects, physical, psychic and spiritual, is nothing but a play of energy or vibration manifested. The *Pratyabhijana*, primarily means

<sup>4</sup> Kaw R.K., *Doctrine of Recognition*, p.

recognition and in this context has reference to the fact that realising one's ownself means the recognition of Shiva. The term has been used in the sense of revealing the powers of self by direct experience. One can recognise himself if he recognises the supreme powers of God and becomes aware of his own self and unites the both into one experience, by his knowledge and action saying certainly: 'I am that very lord.'

### Avanti-Varman

With Avantivarman, who came to power in 855 A.D. Vaishnavism and Shaktism attained prominence in Kashmir.<sup>5</sup> He patronised Shaivism, which was propounded by Vasugupta, the author of *Shivasutras*. Henceforth, the masses were attracted towards Shivism and Buddhism lost its importance as a prominent religion of the valley. The only remnant of the Buddhist literature in Kashmir is *Avdhana-kalpalata* by Ksemendra of the 11th century. This manuscript is available in the Tibetan and the Devanagiri scripts. In order to bring communal harmony between the Buddhists and the Shalvites, Ksemendra wrote *Dash-avatar-charita*.<sup>6</sup> Every verse of this book advocates socialistic and democratic ideas

Being sagacious, Avantivarmana at the outset of his reign subdued other dissonant factors and effected improvements in his administration. Some new appointments were made and Sura was bestowed with the post of the Chief Minister. His reign brought an era of peace and prosperity to the valley. Religious activities, pertaining to Hinduism were resumed and shrines, temples and *mathas* were built by him and his ministers. He was a great patron of art and letters and during his reign, learned men and scholars came to Kashmir from abroad and were placed on important posts. Kalhana credits him with having built many monasteries for the benefit of ascetics. The Towns of Avantipur, Surapur and Suyapur were founded by him.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Dutt R.C., *A note on Kalhana's Rajatarangini*. 1880.

<sup>6</sup> *Dash-avatar-charita*. ms. Research Library, Srinagar.

<sup>7</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, V, 44.



**Avantipur**

Avanti-varmana founded the town of Avantipur, where under his patronage, the Kashmiri architects produced a group of temples dedicated to Vishnu and Shiva, known as *Avantisavamin Vishnu* and *Shiva Avantieshiara*. Both these temples are the products of matured architectural experience of the Kashmiris of that age. The main shrine of Avantisavamin is enclosed by a courtyard adorned with graceful pillars and cells. The monolithic pillar with Garuda stands near the entrance, which is decorated with a crocodile and a tortoise. The main shrine is built on a double base which is intact. The sculptured relief on the stair represents Vishnu seated between his two consorts. Among the group of the gods, two figures represent the king and the queen, who are donors of the temple and they are profusely attired in royal garments. The Avantisvara temple is enclosed pillars.<sup>8</sup>

A group of six temples at Naran-nag in wangath, were also founded by the king. A *matha* for pilgrims to the sacred lake of Gangabal was also constructed here but is in ruins now.

**Suyya**

Suyya, who is remembered as a great engineer up-till now, lived during this period. Of humble origin, he rose to the position of an engineer and conducted the first soil survey in the valley. He not only drained the valley and reclaimed waste land but regulated the course of the Jehlum. The city of Suyyapur, now known as Sopore, commemorates his name. The course of the river, which had been closed due to the blockade of rocks was trenched and the rocks were dragged out of it. Dams were also constructed by workmen under his supervision at several places and a net-work of irrigation canals was started and many villages sprang out of the marshy tracts. Tree plantation on both sides of the river banks was his innovation. Under

<sup>8</sup> For further description see *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir* by R.C. Kak; pp. 118-125,

his supervision, different categories of land were examined and proper distribution of water was arranged. His irrigation projects resulted in the abundance of agricultural produce and prices of foodstuff became low. Flood protection measures were taken by him, with the result that the valley was saved from floods for hundreds of years after him.<sup>9</sup>

### Patronage of Scholars

Himself a poet, Avanti-varmana was a great patron of Hindu art and learning and during his reign Kashmir witnessed the emergence of great scholars like Somananda, Litpaladeva, Ratnahara and Bhatta Kallata.

To Somananda goes the credit of composing *Shiva-dirishti*, in which he presented the *Pratyabhijina* philosophy of Shaivism. The next expounder of this philosophy was Utpaladeva, who criticised various other schools of thought and his conclusions were original. His works have inspired later writers, like Abhinavagupta. Kallata wrote two commentaries on the works of Vasugupta, the founder of the Kashmir Shaivism. Ratnahara obtained fame as the royal poet and the composer of *Hara-vijaya*, an epic poem describing the war between Shiva and Andha-Kasura in which the former attained victory.

### Samkara-Varmana

After having succeeded in defeating his kinsmen as well as his foes, he came to power in 883 A.D. In order to regain the old glory of Kashmir, he organised an army which consisted of "nine lakhs of foot soldiers, three hundred elephants, and a lakhs of horsemen."<sup>10</sup> He penetrated into the Punjab and conquered the town of Gujarat. He is said to have subjugated Hazara and Kangra also. Further conquests were made by him on the banks of the river Indus.

<sup>9</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans, Stein, V. 68-121.

<sup>10</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, Stein, V. 137.



**Destruction of Parihasapura**

Lalitaditya's greatness is manifested in the creation of phenomenally extensive structures at Parihasapura. Having founded the town, he raised the three conventional Buddhist edifices, a *stupa*, a temple and a monastery. These structures were of abnormal dimensions. All these buildings were constructed from massive stones. These were the most important Buddhist structures, for which Kashmir could have surpassed Bamiyan.

But its complete destruction at the hands of, Shankaravarmana is most regrettable. Being anti-Buddhist, he removed enormous building materials from the site to Pattan, where he built two Shiva temples. About sixty-four rich old sanctuaries were plundered by him under the pretext of religious reforms. He further converted all the Buddhist *viharas* into vaishnava temples, which resulted in the decadence of the sculptural art in Kashmir. At present the whole area of Parihasapura is covered with a huge mass of scorched debris.

**Sugandha**

The new king Gopala-varmana, being a minor, the queen mother, Sugandha became his guardian. She became very dissolute through sensual enjoyments and fell in love with her minister, Prabhakaradeva<sup>12</sup>. Thus, having attained the highest position in the realm, he granted estates and posts to his own favourites. Sugandha even manipulated the death of the minor king and herself became the sovereign. The Tantrins who were a military class and formed a confederacy and the Ekangas who were a body of police force got prominence during the period. She continued her rule with their help and goodwill. But, later as a result of a conspiracy, she was forced to abandon royal power. Partha was put on the throne by the Tantrins, but Sugandha collected some Ekanga forces and marched against the new ruler. She was defeated and murdered. Confusion

<sup>11</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, V. 158-162.

<sup>12</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, V. 230.

followed after her death when conspiracies were hatched and palaces were plundered. The Tantrins became the real rulers and amassed wealth through bribes.

### Great Flood

A great flood occurred in 917 A.D. which resulted in the great famine. The prices of the food stuffs rose exorbitantly and many died of starvation. Corpses flowed in the rivers, but Partha and his ministers amassed wealth by selling rice at high prices. During his reign, Nirjita-Varmana, nick named Pangu became the guardian ruler. He had kept a *harem* and used them for prostitution. The queens of Pangu, according to Kalhana, in order to satisfy their sexual desires approached Sugandha-ditya and he pleased them, just as a 'stallion among mares'<sup>13</sup>. The kingdom was brought to the ruin by its ruler and abdications and restorations became order of the day. It was a period of intrigues in which the ladies of high position also took part. The kings were deposed or placed on the throne at the whim of the military factions such as the Tantrins and the Ekangas.

### Chakra-Varmana

Being a child, he reigned under the guardianship of his mother for 10 years, when he was deposed by the Tantrins. He was again, restored to the throne in 935 A.D. He bestowed offices on his helpers and favourites but in spite of it, the Tantrins did not feel satisfied. They wanted adequate bribes and the king could give them nothing for he had no money in his treasury. He fled away and succeeded in getting the support of Sangrama, the leader of the powerful Damaras. In a battle, which was fought at Padampore, nearly six thousand Tantrins fell in the battle field. Chakravaman having won, made a triumphal entry into the capital. He avenged himself by killing all his opponents. After that, he abandoned himself to the life of pleasure and exhausted his treasury on flatterers, bards and parasites. He took foreign dancing girls in the royal

<sup>13</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, V. 281-281.



seraglio and Hamsi, the *domba* dancing girl became the chief queen and the low caste *dombas* rose to power<sup>14</sup>. With the patronage of the queen, they were posted as high officials and even became ministers. The Damaras, who had helped the king in recovering his kingdom got alarmed. Some of them entered the royal chamber and killed him. Unmattavanti was then installed as the new king of Kashmir.

### Unmattavanti

The new king on the advice of his cunning minister, Parvagupta, imprisoned his own relatives, killed most of them and made others to migrate to foreign lands. Partha, the father of the king, was killed by the conspirators in the Buddhist *vihara* of Jayendra, resulting also in the massacre of the poor monks. The king took pleasure in shameful barbarities, and made his step brothers die in starvation. In order to amuse himself, he would order the cutting of limbs of the victims. Being cruel as well as immoral, he led a life of debauchery and kept many women in his seraglio. He died of consumption, due to sexual excesses.

### Interregnum

Confused conditions in the valley and sad affairs of the kingdom added fuel to the fire. The whole country fell into disorder and every powerful leader aspired for the throne. The new bastard-child king Suravarman II, was deposed by the commander-in-chief, Kamala-Vardhana who convened a council of the Brahmins and sought his nomination to kingship. The Brahmins, in their wollen cloaks and with their *kangris* met in a hall for debate while some of them started a solemn fast. They could not agree unanimously, to chose the person, who was to be placed on the throne. Kamala-Vardhana, sought his own election as the king, but the Brahmins wished otherwise. In the mean while, the country remained in interregnum. Consultations continued for six days and different factions projected their own claimants to the throne. Some of the proposers

<sup>14</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, V. 354-387.

started a solemn fast to enforce their claims and the keepers of the shrines marched in procession from different parts of the valley. At last the council decided to elect a member of their own caste as a king. Yasaskara-deva, a Brahman was taken to the royal palace with pomp and show and became the king of Kashmir in 939 A.D. much to the disgust of Kamala-var-dhana.<sup>15</sup> Thus the throne which had remained without a king, was again occupied. The new king had obtained the throne with the help of the Brahmans and as such, in turn promised them his support and obedience.

### Chosen King

The new monarch at the outset wanted to introduce reforms in the administration. He restored order by promulgating the rule of law in a war-torn valley. The police kept vigilance and the country became free of robbers. Kalhana records that even during night, the doors of the shops were kept open and roads became secure for travellers. Everyone got himself absorbed in his occupation; the cultivators started farming, the learned their study and the Brahmans chanting hymns. The influx of students from other countries started and a monastery was constructed for them.

Though a just king, he was greedy and obtained wealth from his subjects in many ways. He appointed four prefects to extract money and thus increased his revenues. Court intrigues again started because the king had become slave of the women. Lalla, his chief queen, who also had illicit relations with others, exerted great influence on him.<sup>16</sup> In order to please the Brahmans, he made land grants in their favour and raised lovers of his queens to high positions. During his illness, he nominated Varnata, a distant relative, to be his successor instead of his son, whom he considered to have been begotten not by himself. But the courtiers wanted to place his son Samgrama-deva on the throne. Yasaskara-deva rolled in agony, where he was poisoned by his relatives in order to secure him immediate death. Para-

<sup>15</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stien V. 459-482.

<sup>16</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, V. 74-77.



gupta, the minister, who had always fixed his eyes on the throne usurped the throne by treachery.

### Historical role of the Brahmins

It can not be denied that the priestly class, known as the Brahmins have played an important role in the history of Kashmir. They have been great philosophers, scholars, poets and teachers. They made Kashmir, a seat of learning, which attracted both students and scholars from far-off lands. Due to their learning, they remained close to the kings and in some cases were the king-makers. As a class, they always tried for their ascendancy and at certain times, brought havoc to the country. Had they maintained a detached view from worldly affairs, they would have created history like Kumarajiva, Shama-bhatta, Abhinava-gupta and Vasugupta. But lure of worldly influence and material advantage, brought them to the level of petty officials, thus invoking the satirical compliments of Ksemendra :

“Being addicted to Vamachara, bent upon taking wine;  
Having set at naught the piety of his clan;  
With a plate of fish meat in his hand;  
He comes for reading scriptures.”

It was Harsha, who broke down the ascendancy of the Brahmins and behaved as a non partisan in religious affairs. He did not object to intellectual pursuits and allowed freedom to all including the muslims to preach their faith.<sup>17</sup> He plundered the treasure from all temples and employed ‘naked mendicants’ to take away divine images made of gold, silver and other materials.<sup>18</sup>

### Daradistan

After its extermination from Kashmir, Buddhism found its asylum in Dardistan. This territory extended from Chitral to

<sup>17</sup> Nalinaksha Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, V.I, p.32. n.2.

<sup>18</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. pp. 1072-1094.

Gurais, on the river Krishenganga, and was ruled over by the Shahi princes, which was a branch of the Shahis of Kabul and the Punjab. These princes were the strong supporters of Buddhism and provided the much needed refuge to the Kashmiri Buddhists, who had to flee from the valley, in order to save themselves from persecutions. Queen Didda was a Shahi princess, who became the ruler of Kashmir in the tenth century. Gilgit became the chief centre of the Buddhist learning during the period. A large number of manuscripts written in the 6th century have been found there. Moreover a few Buddhist stupas have also been located in Gilgit, Yasin and the areas around it.<sup>19</sup>

### Queen Didda

Ksemagupta succeeded his father in 950 A.D. Sensual and vicious by nature, he became still more wicked when he came to the throne. A habitual drunkard, he absorbed himself with his parasites in wine and women. According to Kalhana the royal court became an assembly of whores, villains, idiots and corruptors of boys! The king himself was a shameless brute who indulged in sodomy and spent his spare time in jackal hunts and plunder. The famous Buddhist *vihara* of Jayendra was put on fire by him after plundering its treasures. Previous relics as well as golden statues of Buddha and other deities were got melted under his orders and this work was carried out under his orders by the minority community living at Mleechimar in the capital.

The king of Lahorin gave his daughter, Didda in marriage to the king.<sup>20</sup> It was a political marriage, which not only brought Kashmir closer to Daradistan, but finally under the Lohara family. Didda though very young at the time of marriage, combined in her character all the qualities needed for a sovereign.

She was kind and generous but at the same time cruel and

<sup>19</sup> Nalinaksha Dutt., *Gilgit Manuscripts*. V.I, p. 34.

<sup>20</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VI. 176.



suspicious. In order to gain power, she would resort to any method, whether good or immoral and in this respect, she would go to the extremes. Though slightly lame, she was buxom, graceful and highly attractive. From the outset, she dominated the king to such an extent that he became hen-pecked and the people nicknamed him as 'Didda-Kshema'. She took part in all the affairs of the realm and her name was inscribed on the coins. The king absorbed himself in merry-making, while the queen exercised all royal powers. Didda, being extremely licentious had her own rounds with the ministers, so that her road to the throne could be cleared from all obstacles. The king died under suspicious circumstances and the young Abhimanyu II was placed on the throne by the queen, who became the regent.<sup>21</sup> Diplomatic, cunning, ruthless and energetic by nature, she possessed inborn qualities of rulership and as such smoothened her path to the throne of Kashmir. All officials of the state and even minister obeyed her and she dominated them. She would not tolerate disobedience and knew no mercy. It was her policy not to allow any one to become powerful enough to challenge her authority. Being suspicious by nature, she would not tolerate her ministers to become powerful and she resorted to political intrigues, extortions and murders to achieve her aims. By showering affection at different periods on various ministers, she made them to fight with each other and perish.

### **Mahiman's Rebellion**

In the meanwhile, Mahiman and Patla, the pretenders hatched a conspiracy against the queen and aspired to seize the throne.<sup>22</sup> They collected a force and the queen, though alarmed also made preparations. As her position was weak, she resorted to political deceit. She purchased the supporters of her enemies with gold and exhibited affection for her powerful minister.

Through his intervention reconciliation was brought about between the queen and the rebels. The leaders of the rebels

<sup>21</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VI. 188.

<sup>22</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VI. 211.

were given important posts and one of the rebels Yasodhara was posted as Commander-in-Chief. In order to get rid of him, he was ordered to proceed against the Shahi ruler. As he won a victory he expected royal favour but she got him deported. This resulted in a mutiny in the forces, but she averted this danger by sheer courage, sagacity and political deceit. There were other dangers ahead and she faced them as a brave person.

### Mutiny

A fighting started between the troops, in the vicinity of Srinagar. The rebels were routed and their leaders were either killed or captured. The queen took a terrible vengeance on them. Those captured, were thrown into the river Jhelum with stones bound with their necks. All treacherous ministers along with their families were exterminated. During this crisis it was Naravahana, her minister who had stood by her and she in return paid him with love and all honours. He was appointed *Rajanaka* or the chief of the council of ministers. According to Kalhana, she slept, when he slept, took food when he took it, rejoiced in his joy, and from sympathy felt dejected when he was dispondent.<sup>23</sup> But this personal attachment could not be useful for all times to the queen and when her attachment for him was removed by intriguers, Naravahana committed suicide.

### Political Murders

Now, the queen was without any wise councillor and a paramour, she recalled Pahalagana, who could not refuse the position of honour and worldly pleasures.

Didda used sex for political aims but her son bacame sick to see her evil conduct. He started questioning his mother about her ways, but she was not a lady to be questioned. Abhimanyu could not understand that the interests of the crown were more dear to her and she had to save them by whatever means she could employ. In order to forget himself, he absorbed himself in wine and women and died of consumption. The queen, felt great sorrow for her deceased son and became mild

<sup>23</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein. VI, 262.



and kind. She started works of piety and many shrines, monasteries and temples were constructed through her efforts. This way of life was short lived and she again came to the fore front to handle affairs of the government. Nandigupta, who had replaced Abhimanyu began to question her about her lust for pleasure. Didda was not a person to tolerate such interrogation and resorted to political murder. Nandigupta also died in suspicious circumstances. Now, she placed her grandson, Tribhuvana on the throne. He too was removed after some time and she now placed Bhimagupta, child on the throne. During all these years Didda was the real power. These nominal child kings came and went but her power remained like a rock fixed and unmoved. During all these years she had to face many enemies but made full use of gold and sex to overcome all her difficulties. Sex as an instrument for furtherance of crown interests developed as an institution during her reign. Didda changed paramours from time to time and made them to fight each other and perish.<sup>24</sup> She resorted to political murders, so as to gain political supremacy. She kept Bhimagupta in prison where he was also tortured to death, because he disliked her immoral conduct.

### The Monarch

Having removed all claimants to the throne, she in 980 A.D. resumed all powers absolutely in her own hands.<sup>25</sup> She made her chief paramour, Tunga, a letter carrier, her chief minister and began to live openly with him. This could not be tolerated by the other ministers, who hatched a conspiracy against her and her lover. They collected followers from all sides and Vigraharaja, became their leader. The Brahmans succeeded in enraging the feelings of the masses against Tunga, but in reality they wanted to remove Didda. But she was a clever diplomat and she again made use of gold and purchased certain influential Brahmans. Tunga, now came forward and in warth took a terrible revenge on the rebels who were murdered ruthlessly. Thus, again the queen succeeded in averting

<sup>24</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VI. 321.

<sup>25</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VI. 332.

disaster to her power

Queen Didda, in order to divert attention of the people from home, ordered an expedition against Rajouri. Tunga, who took part in this campaign, burnt down the capital of Rajouri and made the raja to surrender. The net result of the war was that the people forgot his past and the forces of other nobles thinned in this expedition. Tunga after this victory obtained unlimited favours of the queen.<sup>26</sup> Before her death, the queen nominated Somgramaraja as her successor.

### Estimate

For nearly half a century, Didda over-shadowed everyone in the realm. Nominal kings succeeded, one after the other, but Didda remained supreme.

All this shows that she was very cunning and tactful. Everything is fair in love and war, was her maximum. In wars, she played tricks, resorted to political treachery and in love she did not hesitate from murder. In spite of her extraordinary qualities, she was suspicious and fickle-minded. Her favours were not continuous, nor was her enmity. Her personal character was not high and she indulged in excessive sexuality. She was ambitious and this lust for power increased as she advanced in age. She exercised influence at the court for few years, then assumed the duties of a regent, then she virtually exercised the royal power and finally, she herself became the ruler. It goes to her credit that through her own efforts, she became a sovereign in those days when it was very difficult for a woman to be even the master of the household. In fact, she was one of the greatest and the ablest rulers, who have adorned the throne of Kashmir throughout the ages.

### Kashmiri Sculpture

Queen Didda was a great patron of art and literature in Kashmir. During her reign also started the last phase of the

<sup>26</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VI-355.



Kashmiri sculpture. Much is not known about the temples constructed by Didda except Diddasvamin, now known as Diddamar in Srinagar. Of her period, we have two latest sculpture pieces. The first is a bronze representing *Avalokiteshvara* with Tara and Didda on lotus thrones. It has an inscription saying that it was consecrated during her reign.<sup>27</sup>

The other sculpture is a stone relief representing Queen Maya, holding the branch of a tree with one hand resting on the shoulders of her sister, awaiting birth of Buddha. Sakra, the king of the gods, is shown as waiting to adore him. In some way, this relief is reminiscent of such type of reliefs in the Buddhist caves of the Kucha area in eastern Turkistan. It was during her reign that the wooden structures replaced the stone edifices and this type of architecture became popular in the valley.

#### **Al-Beruni on Kashmir**

Al-Beruni was a great Indologist, attached to the court of Mahmud of Ghazna, who provides authentic information of Kashmir during 1017-30. According to him, the Hindu sciences have fled to Kashmir like atoms and he repeatedly refers to the great Kashmiri scholars. He himself composed Sanskrit treatises for circulation among the Kashmiris. While dealing with the geography of the valley, he remarks that the Kashmiris are particularly anxious about the natural strength of their country, and therefore take all care and precaution to keep watch on the passes and routes leading into the valley. As such, it is difficult to have any commerce with them. In the past, they would not allow any foreigner to settle in Kashmir but they would make exception in case of foreigners, especially the Jews.<sup>28</sup>

During this very period, there lived in Kashmir Abhinavagupta, one of the greatest propounders of Shaivism, whose

<sup>27</sup> Kak, R.C., *Handbook of the Archeological and Numismatic Sections of the Sri Pratap Singh Museum*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Beruni, *India*, trans. Sachau, pp. 206-316.

works on metaphysics have given him an important place in the history of human thought. It has been claimed that during his manifold studies, he might have come across with Islamic thought, through the Sanskrit works of Al-Beruni, which the later composed for intellectual domination.

### Abhinavagupta

Abhinavagupta, who is considered as one of the greatest exponents of the Shaiva philosophy, lived during the reign of the queen Didda. Out of his 42 works found so far, 37 are on philosophy. He was born in a Brahman family and inherited interest in spiritual activities from his childhood. He was so fond of learning that he studied under various teachers so as to understand different subjects and branches of learning. His tantric studies are contained in his world famous *Tantraloka*, in which he raised the Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir to zenith. His poetic works also deserve attention and his contribution to the Sanskrit literature as a whole is indeed great. He is one of those great Kashmiris, who have earned fame for their intellectual achievements.

*Tantraloka* can be termed as the most important and famous works of Abhinavagupta, in which he has fully discussed the tantric philosophy. The worship of the supreme being in the female form is one of the special features in this system, where rituals play an important part in realising the glory of *Shakti*, the world mother. This philosophy aims at gaining material as well as spiritual aims, though various rituals are connected with magic and mysticism. The methods of worship and the mode of meditation in the tantric philosophy are intended for the benefit of the common people and these are free from communal or personal considerations.

### Shiva-sutras

The worship of Shiva and Shakti in Kashmir has ancient origin, but one of the greatest philosophers of Kashmir, Vasugupta gave it a sound base in the eight century, when he composed the *Shiva-sutras* under divine revelation. These *sutras*,



were interpreted by various scholars, but it was Abhinavagupta, who showed the practical way of realising the divine powers.

It may be noted here that the Shaivism of Kashmir is a distinct philosophy in its own right, which originated in Kashmir, though it may have some connections with similar philosophies elsewhere. This original philosophy, which is generally called, the *Trika*, by the Kashmiris is of divine origin and as such they refuse the authority of the Vedanta philosophies. In this connection, they assign superiority to the *Paratyabhijina* system, which according to them, is the only perfect and the correct system transcending all other systems of philosophy.<sup>29</sup>

Abhinavagupta worked on the three systems, known as the *Krama*, the *Trika*, and the *Kula*, which were evolved from the *Shaivagamas* and the *Tantras*. He was an original thinker and a great philosopher, who is supposed to have defeated Shankracharya, another scholar of the same name-sake who hailed from south of India. There is a story connected with the cave in Beru, Kashmir, that Abhinavagupta entered this cave along with his twelve hundred disciples and was never seen again.

### **Tunga**

It was during the reign of Didda that the country had again attained order out of chaos. Intrigues and conspiracies had been checkmated, rebellions and dissensions suppressed and the minds of people turned towards national glory. She had succeeded in creating a strong government and the Kashmiris, after many years of turmoil, misery and revolutions, had resumed their peaceful walks of life. Such were the conditions in the valley when the new king Samgramraja came to the throne with Tunga as the chief minister.

He being ambitious, capable and diplomatic, took all powers of administration in his own hands and the king, who was weak, occupied himself in the pleasures of the world. On the other hand, the Brahmans, who believed in their caste superiority felt

<sup>29</sup> Kaw, R.K., *The Doctrine of Recognition*, p.6.

dissatisfied. They knew that Tunga, who belonged to a low caste had risen to such a high position through illegitimate means. They would not tolerate a *Shudra* to occupy the highest post in the kingdom. Moreover, Tunga never cared for them, for he was clever, cunning and powerful. The Brahmans, in order to bring about his downfall, resorted to religious coercion and started a hunger strike. Thus, with this agitation, they wanted to create disturbances throughout the realm. In the past also, they had played this trick often and with success. Kalhana records that when the result of this solemn fast never seemed to materialise, they cried for concessions and when, the government had agreed to it, 'those wicked minded Brahmans' put forward new demands. They thought over a strategy; displaying a few dead bodies and declaring that some Brahmans had been murdered by Tunga. This resulted in a big turmoil, in which the Brahmans, under the leadership of Kalasa fought against the forces of the king. But, the rebellion was suppressed and its leaders were imprisoned. Most of rebels were killed and some fled to foreign lands. Having succeeded in crushing his opponents, Tunga became proud and powerful and the king, out of suspicion, began to fear him. He, now thought of killing Tunga through intrigue but his scheme got exposed.<sup>30</sup>

During this very period the frontiers of Kashmir seemed to be in the state of turmoil because of the impending attack of Sultan Mahmud of Gaznah. Trilochana-pala, the ruler of the Punjab had applied to all the neighbouring rulers for support.<sup>31</sup> Mahmud of Gaznah had earlier failed in his campaign against Kashmir and Tunga could not ignore repetition of such a venture and as such, himself proceeded with a large army to checkmate such designs.<sup>32</sup> The Kashmiri forces took part in the battle against Mahmud. But after the defeat of Trilochana-pala at the hands of Mahmud, Tunga with his forces, returned to Kashmir.

<sup>30</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII, 30.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Beruni, *India*, ii. p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII, 47.



**End of a Hero**

During his absence from the scene, an intrigue for the murder of Tunga was prepared with the concurrence of the king. The conspirators awaited a favourable opportunity and when Tunga came back to see the king, the conspirators followed him secretly and murdered him in the council hall. The Brahmans had now succeeded in their mission to put an end to the rule of a low caste. Henceforth, they occupied important posts in the kingdom and, according to Kalhana, knew 'the science of fleecing the subjects'. They extracted money by illegitimate methods, to benefit their persons. Confusion prevailed in the realm and the king died in distress.

**Mahmud Invades Kashmir**

In the middle of the 8th century, the Arabs had gained control of Gilgit, which posed a real threat to the valley, which had earlier also witnessed an invasion by the forces of Mohammad-bin Qasim. Two other attempts by the Arabs to conquer Kashmir had failed. But, it was in the 11th century that a serious attempt was made by Mahmud of Ghaznah to occupy the valley. Geographically situated as it was, Kashmir did not fall in his line of advance but the help, which Trilochanapala, the ruler of the Punjab, had received from the Kashmiri king, enraged him.

Mahmud, in order to punish, Samgramraja tried to enter the valley from the Toshmaidan route but was stopped by the Kashmiri forces at Loharkot.<sup>33</sup> Due to heavy snow fall, he lost much of his troops and escaped to save his life. In order to retrieve his honour, he again set out in 1021 A.D. from Ghaznah to invade Kashmir. This time, he again followed the same route and the Kashmiris stopped him at Loharkot. This convinced him about the impregnable strength of the Kashmir kingdom and Al-Beruni had to remark that the Kashmiris are particularly anxious about the natural strength of their country and, therefore, take always much care to keep a strong held

<sup>33</sup> Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznah*, pp. 92-104.

upon the entrances and roads leading into it.

### Ksemaraja

Ksemaraja is well known for his contribution to the Kashmir Shaivism. Like his guru, Abhinavagupta, he was a prolific writer and is said to have written two dozens books on the *tantra* poetics and philosophy. Among his famous works can be enumerated his *Siva-sutra-vati*, *Siva-sutra-vimarshini*, *Pratyabhijina-hrdaya*, and *Spanda-nirraya*. In his works, he discusses the means of attaining salvation, the impurities that engulf the individual and the power which infuses life into the physical senses.

### Amanta

The period of Didda, Samgramaraja and Ananta in the Kashmir history can be termed as the glorious period for the Kashmir Shaivism. Ananta came to power in 1028 A.D. with the help of the Ekangas and other influential elements. But the queen mother, Srilekha, who was licentious, had her own ambitious.<sup>34</sup> In order to checkmate her designs, Ananta obtained the support of Rudrapala and Diddapala, the two Shahi princes, who had taken refuge in Kashmir.

On their advice, he married a cruel and cunning princess named Suryamati, the daughter of the king of Kangra. Ananta was a hero of a tragic story. He proved to be a weak fellow and suffered at the hands of his selfish queen. Forced by his wife to abdicate, he became a mendicant but was not spared. His son attacked him, but he was allowed by his wife to resume fight and resume kingship. Finally, he suffered personal indignation at the hands of his wife and committed suicide.

Due to internal disorders, rebellions and wars, the country had lost its prestige, the king his power and the kingdom its glory. Most of the neighbouring states had judged the weakness of the Kashmir kingdom and had an eye on it. When

<sup>34</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 134.



the new king, ascended, numerous feudal lords had cast their eyes on the throne. His period saw the emergence of the two powerful military groups, namely the Ekangas and the Damaras. It was the Ekangas, who had placed the king on the throne and naturally the Darads and the Damaras felt aggrieved. They also considered themselves to be the king-makers. Tribhavana, collected a force of the Darads and the Damaras and marched towards the palace. It may be noted that Kalhana complains about the predominance of the Darads, the Diviras and the Damaras in the kingdom.<sup>35</sup> Ananta on this occasion showed unexpected valour and with the help of his supporters, suppressed the rising of the Damaras. The Ekangas obtained many concessions from king and emptied his treasury.

### Muslims Invited

The Darads having been defeated and humiliated did not rest and Brahamaraja went to the king of the Dardistan and invited him for the conquest of Kashmir.

Subsequently, Acalamangala combined with seven *mleccha* princes, invaded the valley and but were slain in the battle of Khuyrut.<sup>36</sup> This reference to the *mleccha* invasion is very important, because the Darads, but that time, had embraced Islam and that accounts for the hatred shown by Kalhana, towards them. Stein also supports the view that by the *mlecchas*, Kalhan means the muslims. Jonaraja also remarks at a place that the kingdom of Kashmir was polluted by the evil practices of the *mlecchas*.

With the death of the two Shahi princes, Ananta lost his capable advisors. He now came under the direct influence of his queen, Suryamati. With the Brahmans, who created turmoil with their fasts, she followed a policy of appeasement. They were given cows, horses, gold, jewels and other presents. She also ordered construction of temples for the Shaivites. Ksemendra compiled some of his famous works, including *Desopadesa*

<sup>35</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII, 119.

<sup>36</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII, 166-176.

and *Bharatimanjari* during this period. Yogaraja and Bilhana wrote commentaries on the works of Abhinavagupta.

### Ksemendara

Ksemendra, who is also known as Vyasadasa, was a poet of great eminence and his works embrace a large number of subjects in the entire field of the Sanskrit literature. He has been accepted as a poet of the people, in that period when the people were by-passed and the rulers were equated with gods.<sup>37</sup> Instead, he made heroes and heroines of ordinary people and thus provided information about the society during the eleventh century. Compilation of forty works has been ascribed to him but all his works have not been traced as yet. In his *Dasavatara-charita*, he while dealing with the social life of the people tells us about the part, which wealth plays in creating social inequalities. He emphasises that fundamentally there is no difference between man and man and, as such, oppression of the people should be liquidated completely. In this way, he is many centuries ahead of Karl Marx, who pioneered the socialistic movement in the world.

### Suryamati

The queen, took over the charge of administration and the king reconciled to his fate. Having dominated everybody including her husband, she tried to imitate the queen Didda. She introduced many administrative changes and patronised ordinary people. The royal barber became the treasury officer and Haladhara, who was a watchman's son, rose to be the chief minister. He proved a strong man and succeeded in bringing other chiefs into submission. He even abolished certain royal privileges. Ananta, having no work at home started foreign expeditions. Having defeated the king of Chamba he placed his own nominee on the throne.<sup>38</sup> Later, he led an expedition against the Jammu chiefs, who also accepted his supermacy. Bilhana records that Ananta's supermacy was acknowledged

<sup>37</sup> Dhar, K. N., *Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture*, p. 47.

<sup>38</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 218.



by many chiefs. The enemies of Haladhara, who could not tolerate his illicit relations with the queen, after giving the dog a bad name, imprisoned him.<sup>39</sup> The queen, on other hand forced her husband to abdicate in favour of her son. After his father's abdication, Kalasa ascended the throne in 1063 A.D.

### **Kalasa**

After the coronation, some of the old nobles especially Randitya and Haladhara, induced the ex-king Ananta, to resume royal power. Kalasa remained a king in name only and the affairs of the realm were handled by the queen mother. Kalasa, on the other hand wanted to enjoy the pleasures of life and as such, occupied himself in women. He kept four queens and many courtesans. Kalhana has given a long account of the king's procurers and his shameless acts. One of his procurers Chamaka, by name, who had been given the title of *Thakura* by him, had illicit relations with the king's sister and her daughter.<sup>39</sup> This led to an open rupture between the father and the son. Kalasa was so mad in sins that his beliefs changed and he thought sin to be a virtue. He roamed from house at night in search of women. His father, Ananta and his mother Suryamati, filled with shame at the conduct of their son thought of removing him from the throne. Having failed, [they went to Avantipora with determination to leave the country. But Kalasa and his wife approached them and brought them back. Kalasa again took to the licentious life in which he suffered public disgrace. The old king, Ananta and his queen got disgusted and left for Bej-bihara with their treasury, horses and servants.

### **Destruction of Shiva-vijayashvra**

Kalasa, made preparations for flight against his father. He collected foot-soldiers, and raised funds for his army. Having formed a huge force, he marched against his father. But the queen mother secured an armistic between the two but Ananta in his heart cherished the desire to punish his ungrateful son.

<sup>39</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 225.

The hostility between the father and the son grew day after day. Subsequently, the Brahmans started hunger strikes to bring peace but without any result.

On the other hand, Kalasa destroyed soldier of Ananta by poison, fire and sword. He even burnt down the sacred shrine of Shiva-vijayshvara which totally perished in the fire.<sup>40</sup> The shrine of Shiva-vijayshvara was a *tirtha* of great sanctity.

The king and the queen lost everything but still they managed to repair the burnt houses and purchase new stores. Ananta invited Harsha, the son of Kalasa, whom he desired to place on the throne to live with him. This created suspicions in the mind of Kalasa.

### End of Ananta

Kalasa now commanded his father to leave Kashmir and get into exile. Ananta knew that all this has been brought about by his queen. Both of them quarreled and rebuked each other and Ananta made an end of his life by suicide. Thus died a king in a most tragic way. The queen also ended her life as a *sati* on the funeral pyre and her maids also burnt themselves.

Harsha, the grandson of Ananta remained at Vijayashvara, in charge of all treasury. He fell into enmity with his father, Kalasa. After sometime, both reconciled and Harsha was brought to the capital. The king, now set about to improve the administration.

### Administration

Kalasa occupied himself with the problems of administration and took interest in the welfare of his subjects. He always kept before him the budget sheet, pondered over expenditure and income and worked like a clerk himself making various estimates. Kalhana makes mention of aliens, the *Yavanas* to have settled in Kashmir during the period, who have been

<sup>40</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 408-416.



identified as muslims.<sup>41</sup> The king organised the secret department and spies were spread throughout the country for watch and detection of the subjects and the aliens. The people began to progress and the king took personal interest in their advancement. They began taking interest in social and religious activities. Festivities were arranged, choral singing, called *vanvun* and a better technique of female dancing was introduced. The king founded some towns, especially Zevan at about 6 miles east of Srinagar, which possessed shrines, buildings, tanks and gardens. He invited the Turuska artists from foreign lands to decorate the shrines.<sup>42</sup>

### Character

The king took much interest in fun and frolics. Kalasa was basically an artist, who admired beauty. According to Kalhana, he was sensuous to the extreme and beautiful girls were brought from foreign lands and placed at his disposal. His seraglio included princesses, paramours, courtesans and slave girls, numbering about seventy two. Kalasa led a life of voluptuousness and patronised such orgies which were full of song, dance and drinks. He was a drunkard and took wine in the company of even *gurus* at *tantric* rites.

His character exhibited contradictory tendencies.

### Pro-Hindu Alliance

It was Kalasa, who sensed the incoming danger of the penetration of the muslim *sultans*. As such, the king took certain measures to strengthen his position. Vamana was made the prime minister, who confiscated religious endowments and filled up the royal treasury. Kalasa suppressed the Damaras and exiled Bijja, who had led the unruly elements in the kingdom. The king of Hazara, who had rebelled was defeated and brought

<sup>41</sup> Stein remarks that by the term *Yavanas* are meant the Muslims. See *Rajatarangini*, VIII. 2264.

<sup>42</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 528. By the term *Turuska*, Kalhana means the Muslims.

into submission. The king asserted his authority in the surrounding principalities and in order to create a ring of buffer states around his kingdom, convened a royal conference in 1087 A.D. It was attended to by the Rajas of Chamba, Kangra, Lahora, Bhaderwah, Kishtwar, Hazara, Rajouri and Bandipora.<sup>43</sup> The conference was held in his capital at Srinagar. It is significant that the king of the Darads and other chiefs of the northern territories were not invited to this assembly, because they had already accepted the muslim rule. We have earlier seen Kalhana complaining about the predominance of the Darads, the Damaras and the Divaras in the kingdom. These people had accepted Islam and according of Jonaraja were 'polluting the pure air of the valley by their evil practices and usages'. We have also seen that Kalasa organised his secret services and took much precautions about the aliens, who had penetrated into the valley and mixed with the local people. We have also seen that the muslims of Dardistan had been invited by Brahmaraja to conquer Kashmir and their expedition had failed, due to timely action by Kalasa. It is evident that the king wanted to forge a united front of the Hindu rajas against the inroads of the muslim *sultans*. Probably, this was the second call of unity after that of Trilochan-pala.

<sup>43</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 5. 88-590.



## IV

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### Sunset

“Having become disgusted with fatigue;  
By its sporting with the white rays of the moon;  
The starry night keeping vigil gradually gets emaciated;  
Being anointed with the morning dew as if with perspiration.”

—Ksemendra.

### Kathasaritsagra

*Kathasaritsagra* or the ocean of stories, which was compiled by Somananda for amusement of the queen Suryamati, is the largest collection of stories in Sanskrit. These wonderful stories which deal with diverse subjects kindle the imagination of the readers. It consists of eighteen volumes.

### Bilhana

Bilhana was an illustrious poet, who spent a major part of his life in travels. He covered a journey from Srinagar to Rameshawaram in the south of India. Bilhana fell in love with his pupil, the daughter of the king and their love affair went undiscovered for a long time. But, when the king heard about it, he got enraged and sentenced him to death. As a last wish, he recited verses from his own compositions describing his true love with his beloved. The story was so pathetic that the king was moved to tears and pardoned him. Bilhana got married to the daughter of the king.

### Kalasa

The last days of Kalasa were full of misery. The king and the crown prince, Harsha were not on good terms. Harsha was intelligent, cultured and well read. He had seen what his father had done to his grand-father. Kalasa had forced his father, Ananta to abdicate, to leave the capital and then, finally commit suicide. All these sad events had pinched his heart and some of the conspirators especially, Vissavatta, always implored him to stand against Kalasa. He had refrained, due to the paternal affection but at last had to yield. He collected braves to his side and when they were at a zero hour, he asked them to proceed further. The king was informed about the conspiracy and his soldiers surrounded the palace of the prince. Most of the braves were either killed or imprisoned but a few fled away. The prince was captured and imprisoned and his mother, Bhavanamati committed suicide. His own wife, Sugala wished to poison him at the instigation of the king, but the prince was informed and thus saved his life. He lost all hope and believed that his father would kill him any time. Harsha was imprisoned in 1088 A.D. and Utkarsa was recalled from Lohara for paving his way to the throne.

The king retired to the shrine of Martanda. He died in 1089 A.D. and his queen and concubines committed *sati*.



### **Utkarsa**

Utkarsa, though related to the king of Kashmir, was a foreigner to this land. He had been called from Lohara and his accession was facilitated by the greedy courtiers. Utkarsa gave bribes and presents to his followers, but the people wanted Harsha to succeed his father.

Harsha's brother Vijaymalla rose in rebellion against the king, with the help of his followers and the Damaras, who started arson and looting. The city was set on fire and the people went to the prison to save Harsha. After obtaining his freedom, the citizens garlanded Harsha and went in a procession to the royal palace. Harsha ascended the throne, with the help of the people.<sup>1</sup> A revolution had taken place and the people had asserted their right of electing a king. Utkarsa was captured and imprisoned alongwith followers. He committed suicide with a pair of scissors. Thus died he, at the age of 24 years, after having ruled the country for only 22 days.

### **Harsha**

Harsha's accession to the throne marks a new era of benevolent and beneficent kingship. He had seen hardships, misfortunes and miseries. Thus, he was alive to the needs of the sufferers. Kalhana, gives a beautiful description of Harsha's mixed character. He was liberal and at the same time hard; was kind and even cruel; was famous for pious works though a sinner; a fine example of mixed character; worthy and unworthy at the same time. While praising his physical beauty, Kalhana says that Harsha was of a dark reddish complexion, his face was round, his eyes were clear and he had a bushy beard. He had broad shoulders, big arms, narrow waist and a super fine personality. His voice was clear and charming.

<sup>1</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 778-829.

## Court

Kalhana gives an elaborate account of the splendour of Harsha's court, which was magnificent and exhibited pomp, show and grandeur. His ministers and councillors attended the court with magnificent attire. They wore golden bracelets, chains and ornaments. His court included scholars, soldiers and saints. In order to ensure speedy justice, the king had got hung big bells at his palace gate, through which the people informed him of their representations. No important change in the officialdom was made by Harsha and the old officials retained their previous jobs. The rebel leaders were set free and placed on their own posts, except Nonka and a few others, who were executed. The king rewarded his followers with gifts and appointments.

## Conspiracy

Vijayamalla, who had helped the king to secure the throne, became the chief councillor of the king. He fell prey to the advice of the wicked and entered into a conspiracy against Harsha, who was to be invited to a religious function and sacrificed there. But the king had been informed about the intrigue earlier and had taken all precautions. The followers of Vijayamalla started the offensive by attacking the royal forces, but his followers were cut to pieces. He fled away along with his wife, on a horse back to Daradistan, which was peopled by the Muslims. He was received with hospitality by the king of Gurais, who very much liked to fish in the troubled waters. Vijayamalla asked for help and the Darads were too glad to afford him all facilities. His army having been equipped by the Darads, he invaded Kashmir, at the opportune moment, when the Damaras had created confusion in the realm. An accident changed the fate of Vijayamalla who died under an avalanche, near Baltal. The Darads returned to their homes, and Harsha was saved from external invasion.

## Innovations

Harsha was a man of new ideas and hence made new experiments in the realm of art and culture. He introduced new



fashions, which were more elegant and dignified. The people had no hair dress and kept their hair loose, but the king introduced new hair dress for the masses. The people in general could not use rings but he allowed them this luxury. Coloured clothes formerly a monopoly of the rich, were also introduced as a fashion. The practice of illuminations and fire-works came into vogue. The king introduced gold and silver coins which were more artistic than the previous ones.

People appeared in his assembly hall with waving palmleaf fans, adorned with forehead marks of *sandal* ointment and waving sparking daggers. The ladies of the upper classes wore garlands of golden thread, used collyrium for beautifying their eyes, kept their breasts dressed in jackets and looked extremely fascinating dressed in male attire.

### **Patronage**

Harsha was a great patron of the fine arts, literature and crafts. He honoured and rewarded the learned. Himself a poet of high order, he patronised poets. He was fond of singers and kept them in his court. Himself an artist, he loved fine arts, and got constructed fine and massive buildings. Kalhana pictures to us Harsha, as an embodiment of excellent qualities. He founded many shrines and made religious endowments for the hungry, the sick and the helpless. He always gave cows, presents, and alms to the Brahmans. Under his patronage, meetings and performances were held during night, in his assembly hall, which used to be illuminated by one thousand lamps. Kalhana has preserved for us a graphic picture of such lovely night meetings. The king was liberal and gave much of his father's hoarded wealth to the people. Fond of beauty, he kept 360 maidens in his royal seraglio. The people felt happy in such an era of peace and prosperity, indications whereof are found in the abundant issue of gold and silver coins during his reign.

### **Rajanaka Mammatta**

Rajanaka Mammatta was one of the great Sanskrit poets,

Kashmir produced in the 11th century. His famous poetic work entitled *Kavya-Prakasha* occupied a unique position in the entire field of rhetorics.

He was a grammarian and composed this work in ten chapters covering *karika* and *vriti*. This unique work has remained popular throughout the ages and nearly a hundred commentaries were written on it. It has also been translated into foreign languages. Ruyyaka, the author of *Alamkarasarvasva*, lived in the same period. He also wrote on *Karika* and *vriti*, and has surpassed earlier works on the subject.

### **Expedition to Rajouri**

The chief of Rajouri exhibited his disloyalty towards Harsha. Accordingly, an expedition was sent against him, under Kandarpa. The brave general captured the capital with much difficulty. Kalhana says, that in this battle, the Kashmiris used burning arrows against the enemy, Samgrampla surrendered and promised to pay regular tribute to the king of Kashmir. After this victory Kandarpsa was honoured with compliments and presents. The enemies of the general got enraged and they wanted his removal from the capital. Their opportunity came when a rising against the king took place at Lahora. The king sent his trusted general Kandarpa to suppress the revolt. But the ministers filled the ears of the king against him and a force was sent to capture him. He left the country and went to Gaya.

### **Conspiracy**

Kandarpa having been exiled, the selfish councillors and the greedy ministers were free to act according to their will. Dhammata, who aspired for kingship, hatched a conspiracy against the king. He engaged Jayaraja, a half brother of Harsha to perform the act. Three ladies from the seraglio of the king joined the conspirators. But the plot was discovered and Jayaraja was hanged with a rope, and his body was thrown into the river. Now, it was the turn of Dhammata and the king planned destruction of this chief conspirators. He asked one



of the *Thakkuras* to kill Dhammata and the deed was accomplished by the man in the Council hall. His body was left as a food for the dogs and his four sons were also captured and executed. The king in order to make his position strong executed his other relatives.

### Harsha's Iconoclastic Acts

Among the Hindu iconoclasts who preceeded Harsha, mention may be made of Jalauka, Kalasha and others, who destroyed the Buddhist *viharas* and relics. The iconoclism of Harsha was not restricted to the Buddhist *viharas* only but to the Shaiva temples also. In the temple of Bhima Sahi, he found a treasury full of silver, gold and jewels. He diverted his attention towards other temples which were the repositories of wealth. Ruthless spoliation of religious shrines assumed so much importance that he appointed the *Turushka* Muslims as captains in his army to carry out the work of iconoclism. Kalhana also complains that these officers enjoyed great favours under him, because the ruthless work of temple spoliation was done by them. Harsha ordered removal of the gold and silver idols and collected heaps of such treasures. In order to defile the images of gods, he had excrements and urine poured over their faces by 'naked mendicants whose noses, feet and hands had rotten away.'<sup>2</sup> These statues were dragged with ropes and no respect was shown for religious feelings. Harsha desecrated one and all temples in the realm, except the Martanda shrine, in the country side and Ranasavammin temple in the capital. Two statues of Buddha were saved with great imploration of the Buddhists.<sup>3</sup> He confiscated all riches of the sacred temples for financial considerations. Even the great hue and cry in the realm did not deter him from such shameful acts and Kalhana rightly names him as *Turusha* Harsha and Stein has hinted about the propensity of Harsha towards Islam.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 1092.

<sup>3</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 1085-1100.

<sup>4</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. note 1149.

## Advent of the Muslims

The king, in order to divert attention of people, invaded Rajouri and laid a seige of the fort but he met with a strong resistance. In the meanwhile, reports came about the penetrations, which the Muslims were making in the valley. Fearing that his absence from the capital would induce the Muslim sultans to a full scale invasion. Harsha put off the seige and returned. In fact, the Darads had penetrated into the valley from the north, and the advent of the Muslims in Kashmir was now a matter of time. In the meanwhile the *Lavanyas*, who were being persecuted by the king, fled in all directions and some of them become Muslims.<sup>5</sup>

The king of the Darads had captured the fort of Dugdha-ghat near Gurais. Harsha consulted his councillors, who advised him to lay a seige of the fort at any cost so that further in-roads of the Muslims could be stopped.<sup>6</sup> He had no option but to save his kingdom from external dangers. He collected a large army and proceeded to punish the Darads. His army fought with valour and took a heavy toll of the enemy soldiers, but due to heavy snow, the king was forced to retreat, leaving everything near the Tragabal pass. The Darads pursued the king and destroyed a big portion of his army. Harsha saved himself with the help of the two princes namely, Uccala and his brother Sussala. He had suffered an ignominious defeat at the hands of the Darads and his kingdom lay open, now to the external penetrations. Harsha had fallen low in the eyes of his subjects, who desired his downfall. Another calamity was approaching and it came in the shape of a severe famine.

## The Famine

As the prices of the food stuffs had risen very high, the poor people could not afford to buy the necessities of life. They fought for food and killed each other. Kalhana records that

<sup>5</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 1232.

<sup>6</sup> Kalhana., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 1181-1186.



streams, lakes and rivers were filled with bodies of the dead. Harsha became confused and persecuted the Damaras, thinking that their mischievous designs, conspiracies and rebellions had brought this calamity to the valley. Confusion followed in which many lost their lives. Some innocent tribes were also slain and most of these people fled from the country. In this way, the king succeeded in exterminating the Damaras.

### **Court Intrigues**

The councillors of the king learnt no lesson from all these miseries. They wanted the downfall of their opponents. They conspired to bring about the ruin of the two powerful princes, Uccala and Sussala. With the help of the Damaras, the two princes left the country for Rajouri. The king became alarmed and asked the king of Rajouri to kill Uccala. But the latter, paid no attention to it; rather he wanted to use Uccala to his own advantage. Uccala decided to invade Kashmir with the support of the Damaras.

### **Uccala Invades Kashmir**

Having collected the exiled Damaras, Uccala despatched some of them in advance and himself proceeded at the head of a large force for conquest of Kashmir. When Harsha heard the news, he got preplexed and sent his forces to face the enemy. Uccala proceeded after capturing town after town and reached Baramulla. In the meantime, the other Damaras who had heard Uccala's invasion, came from all directions and joined him. He defeated the governor of Parihasapura. The king, alongwith his army came to meet him and Uccala's forces were defeated, due to the treachery of Ananda. But in the meanwhile, Sussala, the younger brother of the king, marched with an army from the direction of the Pir-Panchal. Harsha despatched his forces to fight Sussala but his soldiers were defeated near Shopiyan.

### **Uccala's Coronation**

In the meanwhile, Uccala who had remained in Tulmula, heard the news about Sussala's invasion. The king despatched

a portion of his forces to Lar for the suppression of Uccala. But his forces were defeated and Uccala was declared the king, by the assembly of the Brahmans in 1101 A.D. Having been deserted by the wise, encircled by the enemies and having co-wards at his side, Harsha felt paralysed. In order to avert disgrace and humiliation, he decided to commit suicide. He sent his son Bhoja to the castle of Lohara, for the preservation of his lineage. While the king tried to collect his demoralised soldiers, his courtiers fought between themselves. Sussala burned down many villages and continued his struggle and combat with the forces of the king. He led an attack on Srinagar, because he wanted to capture the throne before his brother, but Bhoja, the crown prince defeated him and forced him to retire.<sup>7</sup>

In the meanwhile, Uccala had arrived from the other side of the capital. While the king fought with valour, the crown prince, Bhoja fled away towards Lohara. The Damaras ransacked the palace and set it on fire. They kidnapped ladies from the royal household and seventeen queens burnt themselves alive. Deserted by his followers, Harsha fled away from his capital towards Andarkot. Now, he was like a begger without anybody to help him. Grief-stricken, dejected and ill-fated, he found refuge in a hut belonging to a poor mendicant. But in the meanwhile, his persuers had arrived on the spot to capture him. Harsha fought bravely but was defeated. His head was cut by the soldiers who despatched it to Uccala.<sup>8</sup> Thus came to an end, the eventful life of Harsha, who had seen misery during his childhood, glory during youth and tragedy in his old age. He had adopted the title the glorious ruler of the universe and in fact, he was the last glorious king of the ancient Kashmir, a twilight of the Hindu rule and the last remnant of pomp and splendour.<sup>9</sup>

### Verdict

Kalhana records that the kingdom of Kashmir was brought

<sup>7</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII, 1537.

<sup>8</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII, 1720-1725.

<sup>9</sup> Shambhu Mahakavi describes Harsha as an ornament of the world, in his *Rajindera-Karnapura-Kavya*.



into ruin due to five maladies namely, the bureaucracy, the royal family, harsh regulations, the treacherous ministers and the solemn fasts of the Brahmans. This is the verdict of the historian of the age and a lesson from history. Previous wars had created a great havoc and devastation in the valley. Uccala had succeeded and one thing was clear, that in order to secure his position, he should play a new game; a clever and cunning game of divide and rule.

### **Problems**

At the time of his accession, the king had to face many problems. The country was full of traitors, robbers and disgruntled soldiers. The next problem pertained to the feudal lords, who had acted as king-makers in the past. The king had to maintain his position, carry on administration and pay his followers. Lastly, he had a rival in the person of his brother, Sussala, who had his own ambitions.<sup>10</sup> In order to win over sympathy, Uccala followed a mild policy with his enemies also. He allowed even robbers to rise to high positions. He protected his previous enemies and showed polite shrewdness. He took interest in the rivalry between Janaka-chandra and Bhimadeva, to see that both of them are crushed.

Both the parties fought each other, and Janaka-chandra was killed by Bhimadeva, the leader of the Damaras. Then the king showed anger towards Bhimadeva, who had to run away from the valley. In this way, he succeeded in destroying the powerful lords, who had private armies.

### **Administration**

After making his position secure and strong, Uccala made certain improvements in the administration. From morning till evening, he would hold an open court, in which he used to redress the grievances of the people. The king advised his officials to remove difficulties of the people and carry on their duties with honesty. He showed unexpected sympathy for the weak and won their affection. Kalhana records that the king

<sup>10</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 192.

was so great that he roamed during night to ascertain facts about his subjects.<sup>11</sup> He encouraged social activities aiming at the moral uplift of the masses. Festivities began to be observed with great splendour during his reign.

### The Brahmins

As the king was not thrifty, he did not spend wealth on erecting or pulling down buildings or shrines. He utilised his money by providing livelihood to those, who had no means of living. Uccala exhibited tact in his dealings with the Brahmins, for he knew that their fasts had created many small upheavals in the past. He told them that in case of such hunger strikes, he would himself begun fasts in turn and even commit suicide. At the same time, he bestowed honours on them and gave them presents such as cows, horses, and gold. The temples which had been burnt down or destroyed in the previous civil wars were repaired and restored.

### The Bureaucracy

The king had a very bad opinion of the official class. He believed that the officials are robbers, rouges and demons, and the king should protect his subjects from them. Accordingly, he did every thing to weaken their position. He knew that the officials and the ministers, if not curbed and kept under suppression would often rise and destroy the king. The most powerful class of officials was the *Kayasthas*. He suppressed them in various ways, such as degradation, dismissal and imprisonment. In order to humiliate an officer, the king would make him dance with his wife, in the open court.<sup>12</sup> To another officer, he gave a strange punishment, in which the convict was bound with a cart, naked and his head half shaved. Kalhana says, that most of these inefficient officials, who had been dismissed by the king, became beggars, street singers and pimps. This gave rise to prostitution and the service classes offered their women to higher authorities. The king employed new officials, who were efficient, trustworthy and honest, but in the long run, such a harsh policy became disastrous. Most of his

<sup>11</sup> Kalhana; *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 55.

<sup>12</sup> Kalhana; *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 94.



important officials, ran away from his court to join his younger brother, Sussala, the king of Lohara. The king lost experienced hands and the administration its pillars.

### **Fight Among Wolves**

Sussala, who desired to capture the throne for himself led a sudden invasion and reached as far as Varahgam in the Beru locality. Uccala, who always acted readily, attacked the invader with a strong force and inflicted a defeat on him. Sussala escaped and took refuge in Daradistan. One of the serious dangers had been averted, but henceforth, Daradistan became an operational headquarter against the kingdom of Kashmir. The Darada patronised many expeditions against Kashmir, which ultimately led to the end of the Hindu rule in the valley. The king was not destined to live long. A band of conspirators attacked his palace at night and surrounded the king who was cut into pieces.<sup>13</sup>

Radda, the city prefect placed himself on the throne as Radda Shankaraja, but the followers of the king and the other claimants to the throne fought like wolves. Garga after killing Radda, became the over-lord.

### **Sussala's Invasion**

The Tantrins and the councillors, after destroying the conspirators, brought Salhana and placed him on the throne. Sussala, the king of Lohara, having heard about his brother's tragic end and marched with a large force towards the capital. But, he suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Garga and reached Lohara with great difficulty. Garga now became the chief minister of Salhana who was inefficient and weak. After making necessary preparations, Sussala again marched with his army for the conquest of Kashmir. He succeeded in surrounding the royal palace, in which Salhana was besieged. Sussala's military general, Sanjapala and his soldiers fought bravely. Amidst this fight, Salhana and his brother submitted and Sussala was acclaimed victorious. He ascended the throne in 1112 A.D. This was one phase of the drama, which had to

<sup>13</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 329.

bring ruin to the kingdom of Kashmir.<sup>14</sup>

### Sussala

The new king proved to be resolute; far-sighted and efficient and even surpassed his elder brother in some respects. He earnestly, began to set right the affairs of the kingdom and posted his trusted men on important posts. But, another trouble was in store for him. The raja of Vallapura gave his daughter in marriage to Bhiksharaja. Gayapala collected a large number of landlords, petty rajas, and mercenaries to help Bhiksharaja and they all now started a campaign to dethrone Sussala.<sup>15</sup> The king felt much troubled and started his preparations. But, a conflict arose in the camp of Bhiksharaja, in which the powerful Gayapala was murdered and his followers fought among themselves. Bhiksharaja fled away towards Rajouri.

### Expedition to Rajouri

In the year 1118 A.D. the king led an expedition for the conquest of Rajouri, because its king Somapala had given refuge to Bhiksharaja.<sup>16</sup> When the Kashmiri forces reached Rajouri, Somapala fled away from the country after placing Nagapala on the throne. As the people refused to submit and continued their resistance, Sussala had to return to the capital without any gain. Having emptied his treasury, he had to fall back upon people. As such, the king now imposed new taxes on them, so as to fill in his treasury. He sent his wealth to Lohara, to be kept in the castle there. But some elements rose in rebellion there and the king sent his army for their suppression. Most of them were murdered but some dispersed in different parts of the country, and caused much havoc. The Damaras who had united into a strong league now started a great rising.

### Rising of the Damaras

In the beginning of the year 1120 A.D. all the Damaras rose

<sup>14</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VII. 481.

<sup>15</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 502.

<sup>16</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 621.



against the king.<sup>17</sup> The Brahmins went on a hunger strike and some of them immolated themselves in fire. The Damaras in order to regain the capital, surrendered the royal army. The rebels of Lohara also joined the disgruntled elements. The king tried his best to suppress the unruly mobs, but failed and was defeated in the first battle at Nagam. The rebellion gained momentum with the arrival of Bhiksharaja, who arrived in the company of Samapala along with soldiers from Rajouri. The Damaras marched at the instigation of Bhiksharaja towards Srinagar. Fighting continued close to the royal palaces. The siege of Srinagar continued for some time and many houses of the city were set on fire. The king lost many of his soldiers, but he showed much valour. Bhiksharaja himself reached Ishbar, on the bank of Dal lake.

The attempts of the king to sow dissensions among the rebels failed. While, the slaughter of the citizens continued, the king remained, hidden inside his palace. Somapala, one of the leaders of the rebels tried to burn the palace, but Sussala left the palace and retired to the castle of Lohara with a few soldiers. His departure was a signal for plunder loot and arson in the capital.<sup>18</sup> The ministers, the officials and the grandees assembled with troops under the leadership of Janaka for the reception and Bhiksharaja entered triumphantly the city of Srinagar and was proclaimed as the king of Kashmir in 1120 A.D.

### **Bhiksharaja**

The new king, on his accession absorbed himself in pleasures, and the sole power of administration was exercised by his minister, Bima, whose wife was the paramour of the king. He neglected affairs of the kingdom and took interest in women and wine. As the grievances of the people had not been redressed, they became dissatisfied with his rule. They now wanted to bring back Sussala as their king. In the meanwhile Sussala, attacked the capital city of Srinagar with a

<sup>17</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII.

<sup>18</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 729.

huge force. Bhiksharaja fled for life leaving his throne vacant, which was re-occupied by Sussala in 1121 A.D.<sup>19</sup>

### Restoration

Sussala, after assuming the kingship won over all the Damaras to his side, and started a campaign to appease all and make friends. In the meanwhile, Bhiksharaja who had fled towards the territory of Somapala, again collected soldiers, and once again proceeded for the conquest of Kashmir. His soldiers were bent upon plunder. The people of Awantipora had fled and taken refuge in the sacred temple there. The rebels set the besieged shrine on fire, which resulted in a cold blooded act of pillage. The whole mob of children, women and old men perished in this fire, and the temples also got destroyed.<sup>20</sup> Sussala got enraged at this crime and himself proceeded to punish the criminals.

The king made a sudden attack on the enemy, causing them a huge loss. In the meanwhile, he also suffered a disaster due to the fall of a bridge on the river Jehlum. With a small number of followers, Sussala attacked the enemy but the rebel forces had besieged the city and in the fight many innocent people died. Though Sussala had lost many soldiers, he held on bravely against the enemy.

Yasoraja one of the most important generals, rebelled against the king and went over to the side of the rebels.<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, after collecting many soldiers, the Damaras led a new expedition and besieged Srinagar. A fierce battle continued and the whole city was set on fire and smoke rose to the skies. When the houses on both sides of the river were in flames, the king got removed the boat bridges, but the city was reduced to ashes. Sussala, who was in a most desperate and a critical situation made a heart breaking speech before

<sup>19</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 947-954.

<sup>20</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 972-990.

<sup>21</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 114'.



the citizens and took an oath to fight upto death. He himself went to the front and fought with vigour and succeeded in repulsing the enemy once again. The king had lost power and his capital was reduced to ashes.<sup>22</sup> His queens had perished and he was in a dejected state of mind. Having made up his mind to renounce the world he brought his son Jayasimha and placed him on throne in the year 1126 A.D

### **Kalhana**

Kalhana was born by about the beginning of the 12th century, at Parihaspura, the capital city founded by Lalitaditya. His father, Chanpaka served as the guard commandant of a border post during the last days of Harsha's reign. There is very little record available about his life except that he was a staunch follower of Shiva. From his childhood, he took keen interest in studies and became well acquainted in various branches of knowledge.

He made an extensive study of the Sanskrit literature, philosophy, religion and ethics. He was a master poet and his *Rajatarangini* itself is a proof of his poetic proficiency.

The *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana is a versefied history of Kashmir upto the 12th century and this monumental work fills a wide gap of our history. It is a rich store-house of historical information about the various dynasties, which ruled over Kashmir in those bygone days. His poetic work is basically the story of the kings, but here and there we get some useful information about the social life of the people. It is most unfortunate that he ignored the Greek and the Buddhist periods in our history due to his antagonistic attitude towards the Buddhists and the aliens, whom he termed as the *Yavanas* and the *Turuskas*. At the same time, he added some imaginary kings to our history out of his poetic frenzy. Also, his chronology of certain periods of our history is not correct. But despite these defects, his work remains unsurpassed as an original contribution to the history of Kashmir.

<sup>22</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 1173.

We are proud of Kalhana to have preserved for us the records of our past.

### Jayasimha

Jayasimha ascended the throne of the kingdom of Kashmir in 1128 A.D. The general state of affairs, at the commencement of his reign had been described by Kalhana as most precarious, full of chaos and lawlessness. The whole kingdom was divided and controlled by the numberless Damaras and other tribal chief. The feudal lords, who had appropriated big lands without any authority constituted a great source of danger to the king. Former officials, ministers and councillors were not loyal to the crown. They too were bent on creating mischief, hatching conspiracies and fomenting treason to their own advantage. Due to this unhappy state of affairs, the masses had been rendered helpless and put to immeasurable sufferings. The wars of succession had shattered the economy of the kingdom and rendered it bankrupt. Jayasimha after his accession followed a policy of pacification from the beginning.<sup>23</sup> Being brave, resolute and diplomatic, Jayasimha defected his enemies, subdued his rivals and crushed his opponents. In order to safe-guard the frontiers and making his position strong, he entered into a matrimonial alliance with Somapala. His foremost enemy, Bhiksharaja, who was still alive and cherished hopes of snatching the throne, collected soldiers and wanted to take advantage of the king's weak position. At his instance, most of the Damaras rose in rebellion and he himself led the revolt. But the king won over the Khasa chief with bribes, who betrayed his colleagues and Bhiksharaja gained an honourable death while fighting bravely in the battle-field. His corpse was cremated with honours under orders of the King.<sup>24</sup>

### Rebellion of Lohara

Now a fresh trouble arose at Lohara when soldiers rebelled

<sup>23</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 1377.

<sup>24</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 1779.



and acclaimed Lothana as their king. The conspirators had forged letters to convince the people that the orders regarding installation of Lothana had been sent by the king of Kashmir, from his death bed. They captured the treasury and made their position strong by distributing money. Somapala and Sujji also joined them. Jayasimha despatched strong force to suppress this revolt but failed and thousands of the Kashmiri soldiers lost their lives in this campaign.

At the same time, Lothana went to Darpitapura to celebrate his marriage. His officials, at the instigation of the king of Kashmir, crowned Mallarjuna as the king of Lohara. After collecting supporters, they entered into the castle of Lohara and Lothana lost both his throne and his maidens. Shortly afterwards, Jayasimha then sent an expedition against Lohara. Mallarjuna sued for peace and agreed to pay a handsome tribute to Jayasimha. In the meanwhile, Lothana attacked Lohara and after plundering it, entered into Kashmir. Jayasimha despatched a big force under Sujji for the conquest of Lohara. Mallarjuna was dethroned and the territory was retaken.<sup>25</sup>

### Vijayaraja

The administration of the country had fallen into disorder, due to the previous wars. In order to fill in the empty treasury, the king imposed new taxes, burden whereof fell on the masses. Vijayaraja, a revolutionary youth could not bear the sufferings of the people and decided to kill the minister, who had brought miseries on the masses. He thought that even if he lost his life in this attempt, the other officials would never again oppress the people. He seems to be a spark of light in this age of darkness.<sup>26</sup> Vijayaraja was bold enough to strike the head of Chitratha with a dagger and thought that the oppressor of the people was dead. But after he had left, Chitratha again regained consciousness. Vijayaraja presented himself before the king, who got him assassinated. But Chitratha

<sup>25</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 2024.

<sup>26</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII. 2241-2259.

became mad due to the wound on his head and his coffers which were full of gold, jewels and arms were confiscated by the king.

The king restarted a system of granting hereditary *jagirs* to the Brahmans and the nobles. He got constructed boarding houses for use of the scholars. He also granted permanent land endowments for shrines. His example was followed by the upper classes, with the result that numerous religious institutions were founded, Jayasimha got adorned the famous cities built by the previous kings. Bridges, embankments and stairs on the banks were constructed. Jayasimha got constructed, Rilhan-eshavara, a shrine for the Shaivites and a *vihara* for the Buddhists at Bhalerakaprapa. Further, he founded the towns of Bhuttapura and Simhapura. Peace and order was restored in the whole kingdom. Travelling became safe and prosperity regained again. Due to the abundance of crops, the villagers felt assured and food grains became cheap. It is interesting to note that during his reign, there existed 64 castes in the upper classes.

### Foreign Affairs

The king of the Darads, who was a friend of Jayasimha died and after his death, troubles arose in that kingdom. The chief minister of the deceased king, Viddasiha gained power for he was a paramour of the widow queen. Having placed a child of the late king on the throne, Viddasiha, became the virtual monarch. The condition deteriorated when a pretender was put forward by another minister. Jayasimha, who was a clever intriguer, could not keep quiet but wanted to interfere in the affairs of the Darads for his own benefit. For this purpose, he despatched a force against them.<sup>27</sup> In the meantime, Lothana having obtained the support of the Damaras and the Brahmans, invaded Kashmir. But the king faced him bravely and Lothana, once again fled. The castles of the nobles and the rebels were besieged and destroyed. Lothana was captured and brought in.

<sup>27</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. Stein, VIII, 2456.



chains before the king, who got him executed.

### Bhoja

Bhoja, the most powerful and active among the rebel leaders managed to escape to the Darads. After securing aid of the Darads and the Damaras, he invaded Kashmir. Having lost in the battle ground, he showed inclination to submit, but Jayasimha was too clever than Bhoja. In accepting this position he asked his chief queen to play the role of mediator. Bhoja was received in the royal camp and the rising of the Damaras collapsed. They were suppressed and brought under tight control. According to Kalhana, Jayasimha's reign concluded in 1150 A.D. after a rule of 22 years, but contrary to it, Jonaraja claims that the king ruled till 1155.<sup>28</sup>

### The Yavanas

Reverting to Jayasimha, it may be mentioned that Jonaraja informs us that the king succeeded in suppressing the *Yavanas* and the *Turaskas*.<sup>29</sup> It has been mentioned earlier that the terms *Yavanas* or the *Turuskas* stand for the Muslims in the Sanskrit chronicles. The rulers of the Punjab hill states sent their troops to support Jayasimha in his conflict with the advancing Turks and the Gaznavites. It is probable that by then, the Muslims may have completely over-shadowed the surrounding territories towards the north and the north-west of Kashmir. It is not known as to which part of Daradistan was under the administrative control of the *Yavanas*. But it is a historical fact that the leader of the Turks after having suffered reverses at the hands of Jayasimha, offered his tributes to the king of Kashmir.

### Sun Set

Jayasimha was followed by weak kings, whose unsteady rule brought economic and political ruin to the country. It was half

<sup>28</sup> Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, edit, Srikanth Koul. St. 38.

<sup>29</sup> The term, *Yavana* stands for the Muslims whether local or foreigners. The term, *Turuska* is synonymous with the *Yavana* or the *Mleecha*.

a century of misrule and oppression in which the masses suffered ravages of the upper classes. The Damaras, the Layanyas and other feudal lords continued their struggle in order to dislodge each other and thus accelerated ruin of the kingdom. The valley was divided into many princedoms in which, every feudal lord considered himself the king of Kashmir. The Brahmans, in order to assert their position, played a dirty game in bringing down the rulers, with the result that one of the king of Kashmir, Rajadeva ordered their wholesale destruction. Most of the weak and the terror stricken Brahmans in order to save themselves disowned their religion.<sup>30</sup>

In the meanwhile, the influx of Muslim adventures both from the west and the north of the kingdom had accelerated. It was a period of transition in which a host of Muslim soldiers, saints and scholars entered into Kashmir. The kingdom had become weak, with the result that even foreigners started meddling into its internal affairs.

### Khajlak the Turuska

Internal weakness of the kingdom, encouraged others to invade the valley. Khajlak, whom Jonaraja has mentioned as Kajjala the Turuska, entered Kashmir during the period. The king fled away towards the Lidar valley with the result that Khajlak succeeded in occupying the throne of Kashmir upto 1287 A.D.<sup>31</sup> He did not consolidate his position here because his aim was to capture the throne of Delhi. After crossing the Punjab, Khajlak, alongwith his generals, Sarmak, Kili, and Baidu, invaded the territory of Delhi, which was then governed by Sultan Muiz-ud-din Kaiqubad.<sup>32</sup> Occupation of the valley by the Turks from 1259 A.D. to 1287 A.D. resulted in starting an era of anarchy in the kingdom of Kashmir. After the departure of Khajlak, many feudal lords became claimants to the throne of Kashmir. Sangrama-chandra, who claimed to have driven out the invaders, claimed that he was the real claimant.

<sup>30</sup> Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, Srikanth Koul, St. 84.

<sup>31</sup> Yuls, Marco Polo, V. I. p. 104.

<sup>32</sup> Elliot, *History of India as told by its Historians*, V. III, pp. 525-527.



to the throne.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, Simhadeva, the son of Lakshmanadeva, declared himself the king of Kashmir from his hideout in the Lidar valley.<sup>34</sup> He tried to improve the conditions prevailing in the kingdom and laid foundations of many religious institutions. But in the later part of his life, he seems to have drifted away from Hinduism. He openly spoke against gods and goddesses with the result that the Brahmans got him murdered through an intrigue, lest he openly turn a Muslim. Darya supported by Kamasuha was the assassin.<sup>35</sup> His brother, Suhadeva ascended the throne in 1301 A.D. with the support of Ramachandra, whose daughter Kota Rani became the chief queen. Suhadeva was the ruler in name only and the real power was exercised by Ramachandra and Kota Rani. Other feudal lords were jealous of the power of Ramachandra and always tried to hatch conspiracies for his downfall.

### **Muslims Patronised**

Jonaraja informs us that Suhadeva also extended his Patronage to the Muslims and many of them, who had come to seek employment there in Kashmir, were bestowed with important jobs in the kingdom. Some of them were local converts but most of them had come from outside and these also included mercenary recruits. Some of them who were nobles and descendants of the ruling families attained much respect and power in the kingdom. One of them was Shahamira, son of Teharala, of the lineage of Arjuna, the hero of the Mahabharata.<sup>36</sup> Shahamira came to Kashmir alongwith his family in about 1313 A.D. and was posted as the commandant of the castle at Andarkot. His ancestors were converts to Islam.

### **Gyalpo Rinchina**

Gyalpo Rinchina belonged to the Balti tribe, which lived in

<sup>33</sup> Hassan Shah, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, V. II. p. 159.

<sup>34</sup> Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, edit, Srikanth Koul, St. 118.

<sup>35</sup> Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, edit. Srikanth Koul, Sts. 119-128.

<sup>36</sup> Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, Sts. 131-137.

Kharmong. His father Bakatanya was the chief of the tribe and held sway over the area right upto Vakha in Kargil. By the time, nearly the whole population of Baltistan had adopted Islam, though they retained their Buddhist beliefs also. His father Bakatanya was murdered by his kinsmen. After his father's death, Rinchina obtained the help of Vyala and Tukka and avenged the murder of his father. But it became difficult for him to stay at his palace and as such, he set out towards Kashmir, alongwith his Buddhist followers. He occupied the village of Nilah in Lar under the patronage of Ramachandra. In the course of time, he became the over lord of the area and after gaining strength started raids in the mountains to extend his sway.<sup>37</sup>

### Tartar Invasion

The kingdom of Kashmir disintegrated due to the invasion of the Tartars in 1320 A.D. Dulcha, the commandant in the army of the king of Turkistan, entered the valley through Baramulla alongwith a huge army. Suhadeva tried to collect money from all, so as to buy off the invader but failed due to the opposition of the Brahmins. As such, instead of facing the enemy, he fled away towards Kishtwar leaving his household, including his queen Kota Rani, at the mercy of the invaders. His prime minister, Ramachandra also ran away towards the Lar alongwith his riches and the family. Thus the whole valley was exposed to the invader by its ruler and it was Shahamira alone, who stood at his post and tried his best to save the kingdom.

Dulcha ransacked the valley for nine months and finally perished in a snow storm near the Banihal pass.<sup>38</sup> Ramachandra came out of his hide-out utilising this opportunity to his own advantage and usurped the throne of his son-in-law. Rinchina and the other feudal lords, who were already jealous of Ramachandra rose in a rebellion against the usurper and stormed the royal palace. Ramachandra fled away towards Lar, but was

<sup>37</sup> Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, St. 146-153.

<sup>38</sup> Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, St. 159.



chased and killed by the followers of Rinchina, who assumed the government in his own name and proclaimed himself as the king of Kashmir on 6th October 1320 A.D.<sup>39</sup>

### **Rinchina Embraces Islam**

By a stroke of luck once again a Buddhist had become the king of Kashmir. History had repeated itself after five centuries. Rinchana had taken advantage of the anarchy that prevailed in the valley after the Tatars had left the country. But due to their communal outlook, the Brahmins were not ready to accept the Buddhist rule, which meant a death-knell to their privileges, which they had enjoyed as the most reversed caste among the Hindus. They were not prepared for such a change and hence started intrigues against the new ruler, who was an alien. Rinchina, in order to appease them, made a formal announcement of his marriage with Kota Rani. But, still the Brahmins did not feel satisfied and desired his dethronement. Jonaraja's statement about Rinchina's request for admittance to the Hindu fold is only a conjecture, for he is silent about the religion that Rinchina eventually adopted.<sup>40</sup> Rinchina was a Buddhist and he was eager to obtain the support of the Hindus to strength his position as a ruler. But such a support was denied to him by the Brahmins. The Buddhists and the Muslims remained at his back. He had been brought up in an environment of toleration. He felt disgusted at the narrow attitude and conservative outlook of the Brahmins and was drawn towards Islam. He assumed the name of Sadur-ud-Din and thus became the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir.

### **Administration**

During his reign, Ravanchandra was appointed to the post of commander-in-chief and Shahamira was made the chief minister. He tried to establish peace and order in the kingdom. For this purpose, his forces stormed the strongholds the Dama-

<sup>39</sup> Parmu R.K., *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, p. 77.

<sup>40</sup> Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, St. 174-193.

ras, which had served as the chief centres of confusion and turmoil in the country in the past.

Rinchina broke their strength and they were reduced to a state of terror.<sup>41</sup> He also broke the league of the unruly elements in the kingdom and gave rest to the valley, which had been weary of chaos and disorder. Jonaraja is all praise for Rinchina's sense of justice and says that he spared none, whether minister, friend or son, who interfered with justice. At the outset of his reign, Suhadeva reappeared in the valley from Lar with his forces but was defeated by Rinchina. He fled away again towards Kishtwar. There occurred a rising of some Hindu feudal lords but Rinchina succeeded in suppressing that also. Now, an abortive attempt was made on his life by the Brahmans. It was engineered by Udayandeva, the brother of Suhadeva, who incited Tukka, one of the feudal lords to kill Rinchina and seize the throne. The conspirators struck Rinchina with swords in the vicinity of Idgah in Srinagar and thinking that he was dead, ran away to the palace to announce his death. But he regained consciousness and rushed towards the palace with his followers. His assailants were caught, impaled upon stakes and their women were also killed by ripping open of their wombs.<sup>42</sup>

Rinchina founded a walled quarter in Srinagar after his own name, known as Rinchinapura. He also built the first mosque in Srinagar, which is known as Raintan *masheed*. He also built a charity kitchen at Bulbul Lankar in memory of his religious mentor. Jonaraja, has termed the rule of Rinchina as the golden age in the history of Kashmir.

Rinchina died at the end of 1323 A.D. leaving behind his son named Haider Chandra from his wife Kota Rani. Before his death he invited Shahamira to take charge of the queen and her son. Kota Rani became the ruler in the name of her son, with Shahamira as the Prime Minister.

<sup>41</sup> Jonaraja., *Rajatarangini*, St. 176.

<sup>42</sup> Jonaraja., *Rajatarangini*, Sts. 180-183.



**Kota Rani**

Kota Rani started her rule as a regent in the name of her son, Haider-chandra. Her first act was to invite Udayanadeva the regicide of her husband, Rinchina, to the capital, who was supported by the Damaras. In order to strengthen her position, she also married Udayanadeva in utter disregard to the advice given by her prime minister, Shahamira. Thus she brought disgrace to the royal family by marrying the enemy of her former husband. Secondly, without caring for the claims of her son Haider-chandra to the throne of Kashmir, she installed her third husband, Udayanadeva on the throne of Kashmir. Shahamira as her prime minister and as guardian of Haider-chandra did not approve her acts. So in order to remove him from the capital, Shahamira was granted the region of Kamraz in perpetual proprietorship. But she could not remove him from the post of prime minister nor from his position as guardian of Haider-chandra, the crown prince. At the same time the queen, ignoring the claims of the sons of Ravana-chandra, who held the post of commander-in-chief, appointed Bhatta Bhikshana, as her commander-in-chief, and also made him guardian of her second son by Udayanadeva. The net result was that the whole kingdom was divided into two factious led by Shahamira and Bhatta Bhikshana, as guardians of her two sons by her two husbands. Jonaraja, the chronicler of the period rightly remarks that the royalty was debased when it passed from Rinchina to Udayanadeva, who took no interest in the affairs of the kingdom.<sup>43</sup>

**Acala Attacks Kashmir**

Kota Rani had ignored the claims of the sons of her brother to the post of commander-in-chief. Acala, one of the sons of Ravana-chandra, who had obtained the support of the Muslims of Poonch and Rajouri, made a sudden attack on the valley.

<sup>43</sup> Jonaraja; *Rajatarangini*, Sts. 224-230.

Udayanadeva, who was a coward acted in the same manner as his brother had acted at the time of Dulcha's invasion. He fled away towards the hills leaving his queen, his child and his subjects to the mercy of the invaders. But Shahamira, at this critical juncture played a dignified role and faithfully discharged his duties as the prime minister of the kingdom. He succeeded in enlisting the support of the people and the army. He faced the invaders in the battle ground and saved the kingdom from another catastrophe. But Kota Rani, on the other hand, offered the throne to Acala in utter disregard to the legal claims of her sons. At the same time, she invited the followers of her dead husband, Rinchina to take over administration of the valley.<sup>44</sup> Shahamira, on the other hand suppressed the feudal chiefs and brought peace to the country. After the invading forces had left, the people acclaimed him as their saviour.

### Shahamira

After this turmoil, Udayanadeva returned to the capital and was received warmly by her queen, Kota Rani, who placed him in charge of the administration. Her decision did not find favour with the people and the Damaras, who now offered their allegiance to Shahamira, rose in rebellion.

Shahamira, fortified himself in the fort of Chakdar and declared Haider-Chandra the crown prince as the king of Kashmir. Kota Rani on the other hand ignored the claims of Haider-Chandra and appropriated the kingdom of Kashmir to herself.<sup>45</sup> At the same time, she promoted Bhatta Bhikshana to be her chief minister, to the resentment of Shahamira. Her action resulted in a turmoil in the capital, with the result that majority of the ministers and the chiefs sided with Shahamira. Having been insulted and humiliated, he made up his mind to make an end of the advisors of the queen. Kota Rani deputed her chief minister, Bhatta Bhikshana alongwith Avatara and

<sup>44</sup> Jonaraja; *Rajatarangini*, Sts. 234-238.

<sup>45</sup> Jonaraja; *Rajatarangini*, Sts. 265-267.



other ministers to make a settlement with him, but he got them assassinated in his own castle.

### The End

Her ministers dissuaded her to arrest Shahamira but she made an attempt to punish the feudal lords, who had gone to the side of Shahamira. Having failed she shifted to the castle of Andarkot, leaving the capital to the mercy of Shahamira, who occupied it with the support of the Damaras. Kota Rani lost her mental equilibrium and was arrested by Shahamira who put her in prison, alongwith her two sons, the crown prince, Haider-chandra and the younger son, Jatta. A party of the Damaras tried to release her from the prison but failed. Shahamira himself became the king of Kashmir under the title of Sultan Shams-ud-Din in 1339. A.D.

Jonaraja, the earliest available authority for the period says that Kota Rani passed her life as a prisoner alongwith her sons. The stories regarding her suicide are fictitious interpolations made by the Persian historians of the later periods. Similarly, the story about her marriage with Shahamira is concocted.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Jonaraja., *Rajatarangini*, trans. Srikanth Koul, Sts. 301-304.

## V

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### TWILIGHT

“Hindu idea is this :  
That the lotus wherever it grows ;  
It is beautiful and pure”.

—Kapila.

The early Aryans of Kashmir, were no doubt in a stage of savagery, but they advanced with the passage of time in every sphere of human activity. They expanded and advanced into India and ultimately colonised considerable portions of it. At that time, the Kashmiris had no state, no slaves and no private property. Their was a homogeneous society and with no classes or castes. They worked collectively, produced collectively and consumed collectively.

‘There was no kingdom and no king, no punisher and no punished. By their very law of being, the people protected



each other'. They were a free people and they lived happily. But later on, they started domestication of animals and occupation of agricultural lands. Thus a new mode of living lifted them from primitive to a new age and a new social order.

The population having multiplied in numbers gradually came to be divided into various groups.

These groups continuously fought with each other for lands and cattle. Their incessant feuds produced war chiefs, who later became *rajas* or the petty kings. Thus kingship found its way into the Kashmiri society.

### **Creation of the State**

The concept of ownership emerged from the tribal wars and petty states came into existence which led to the suppression and exploitation of rival tribes. The chief of a tribe came to acquire a definite territory and became responsible for the protection of its tribal inhabitants and this organisation thus continued itself into a petty state. The raja, after having accumulated much wealth and subduing neighbouring *rajas* became the *maharaja* or the overlord. In the creation of the state, force played the most important role. In fact, force became the very basis of its existence. Thus the boundaries of these states were defined and Kashmir was parcelled out into a few such small states.

### **Praja-pati**

The first and the most important person who confronts us at the beginning of the study of Kashmir history is Kashyapa. He has been spoken as "the father of the people". He seems to be the first important Aryan king of Kashmir, who waged wars of driving out the earliest settlers, from this land. No exact date can be assigned to his reign. After his death, his descendants ruled the country for sometime.

## Kings

The early kings of Kashmir were temporal as well as spiritual heads, who exercised vast powers independent of any control. "Might is right" was the axiom of the day and wealth was regarded as a great force as it is today. So only powerful and wealthy people could snatch power from rivals and become kings. But later, a third factor also emerged. The most influential class among the society was that of the Brahmans. The kings had to enlist their support in order to enhance their influence on the people. Then in the course of time, there arose a powerful military class, whose services became indispensable for the kings. Obviously the kings, in order to gain and retain their power, had to secure the support of both Brahmans and the military classes. These two classes, shaped sovereignty with the king and enjoyed all power. The lower classes of people, who had neither wealth nor spiritual ensign, suffered and were exploited for the benefit of the state.

## Administration

The kings of Kashmir were generally despots and autocrats. But some were benevolent despots and kind kings too. One thing is clear that all of them believed in kingship and kingdom; in the ruler and in their divine rights. There was no democracy worth its name and the dictatorship of the war-lords was the political order of the day.

The kings had evolved their own system of government. The head of the administration was a raja, who had a council of ministers to advise him on matters of state. It was only an advisory body and did not always exert effective influence in the shaping of the policies. The king could appoint or dismiss ministers or officials of the state at his will. He had both civil and military powers vested in his own person and he could make war or peace. His word was law and he decided all the cases himself. He could impose taxes, raise army and could do whatever he liked. Besides, he also had certain duties towards his subjects. Among the most important duties of the king was the main-



tenance of law and order and to safeguard the lives and properties of his subjects. The work of public utility were directed towards the amelioration of his subjects. He could ignore these obligations if he liked and, there was no constitutional check on his authority. Only a rebellion or a solemn fast was a recourse open to the Kashmiris.

### **Sabha**

The Sabha was a council of advisors, nominated by the king. The members of the *Sabha* used to be mostly, persons drawn from upper classes. The tribal chiefs, military lords, princes and the Brahmans used to constitute the *Sabha*. The rajas consulted this assembly on important matters.

### **Ministers**

The rajas used to have several ministers to assist them. They held and enjoyed office at the king's pleasure, who could dismiss them on any trivial pretext. These were a sort of advisors of the raja and the chief among them was the prime minister. Each minister used to have an assembly separately but they often met together in the king's palace for transacting the state business.

Mostly these ministers were the kings's relatives, to whom the king delegated his executive powers to run the administration. The commander of the army exercised the power of a chief advisor on matters relating to military arrangements and operations. In fact, all these ministers were advisors to the king and no ministers in the modern sense of the term.

### **Officials of the Government**

The first reference to a limited legal administration is found in the reign of Jaluka. He had seven main departments, each under an officer appointed by the king. The main seven officers in order of importance were (a) The Judge, (b) the Revenue Superintendent, (c) the Treasurer, (d) the Commander of

the army, (e) the Envoy, (f) the Priest, (g) and the Astrologer. It seems that in his reign, the legal advisor and the revenue Superintendent were the most influential officials of the State. The ecclesiastical official had somewhat a lower position. Jaluka is recorded to have augmented the number of state offices to eighteen, but their details are not available in the chronicles. In the reign of Lalitaditya, we find the addition of five more offices. The designations are (a) the High Chamberlain, (b) the Chief Foreign Minister, (c) the Chief Master of Horses, (d) the High Treasurer, (e) the Chief Executive Officer. In reality these offices, existed before Lalitaditya also, but he made an important innovation. In his reign, each ministry was placed under a chief minister assisted by a deputy. The chief minister mostly belonged to the highest class in the society, whose title was Shahi. It seems that they were generally princes and the relatives of the king.

Jayapida is stated to have organised the administration of Justice on a sounder basis.

He established a full-fledged office for the administration of justice. He also created an office of mobile Treasurer for the quick disposal of financial business.

Sankara-Varmana, was extravagant and reckless in his expenditure and his bid to exhaust resources necessitated the re-organisation of the revenue office. For this purpose, he established two offices, namely the Lord of the Market and the Controller of the Domestic Affairs. These offices had secretaries and clerks also. Written records were not kept abundantly. Every official business was done orally upto the 9th century.

### **The Lord of the Gate**

One of the most important officials was the Lord of the Gate. There were several such officials in the kingdom, having charge of the pass leading into Kashmir. Mostly, this post was held by a military commander, who kept sufficient force



under his command for the purpose of guarding the passes and preventing the ingress of any belligerent military operation. The Lord of the Gate is recorded to have played a very important role in the political life of ancient Kashmir.

### **Police and Prefects**

The whole country was divided into province, each under a governor classed *Mandalesa*. Each city had a perfect, who was called *Nagara Dhikrta*. There were prefects of police appointed for the maintenance of law and order. The *Ekangas* was an organised military body employed for police duties. The duty of the prefect of police was to arrest and punish criminals. There was another official called the prefect of the property, whose duty was to collect double revenue for the raja. King Harsha had appointed prefects for "the overthrow of the divine images".

### **Padagra Office**

The chief minister had his own office which was called the *Padagra*. It dealt with executive as well as revenue administration. Mostly, this office was concerned with regulating the finances of the State. This office raised the revenue of the state by various methods.

### **Justice**

The administration of justice was neither efficient nor speedy. The raja was the final authority on law. There were a few judges in the kingdom headed by a Chief justice. Locally, the people decided their simple cases in presence of the village elders. The raja heard only important cases. There was no regular or organised system of courts. No written applications and no written judgements are found in the ancient chronicles. the complaint was heard orally and decided orally in presence of both the parties. King Harsha had installed big bells hanging in his palace hall, for use by the complainants, who would ring them to inform the king that his people wanted justice.

## Punishments

There was no equality before law as it is understood today. Punishments varied, according to the status of persons. The upper classes were either exempted or fined lightly. Execution as a punishment was not inflicted on the Brahmans and the princes. There was a variety of punishments. According to the accounts of the Chinese travellers, the criminals were thrown into pits. Offenders, cheats and defaulters were banished and exiled. The branding of the mark of a dog's foot on the forehead was a common punishment. Sometimes, the convicts were disgraced in the public eye and let off after shaving-off their heads and beards. Cutting of nose was a punishment, inflicted on unchaste wives and widows. King Uccala in order to degrade his guilty official, sent him to jail, where he had to wear hemp cloth and also made him to act like a strolling player in the court, even together with his wife. Hemp-made garments were used by prisoners in jails. They were given rough food. While in prison some prisoners were tortured with sparks of fire, pricks of needles and with various other cruel methods before executing them. Harsh punishments were inflicted by cruel kings. Ksema-gupta got Samgrama, burnt alive mercilessly. Often a rebel was thrown alive into the river with a big stone tied round his neck. The punishment for loot, arson and murder was death. Political murders instigated and abetted by the kings and the nobles were in vogue and the executors of these political murders were handsomely rewarded.

## The Role of the Officials

This period presents an unhappy picture owing to the high handed activities of the official class. Some of the officials were greedy dacoits, who could even rob their masters and divided the ill-gotten wealth even in their presence. The chief aim of the officials had been the accumulation of wealth. There are numerous ugly instances of officials having played the role of looters, intriguers, conspirators, traitors and murderers, during all the period under review. The officers of the state, with the exception of a few, were corrupt and did nothing for the masses.



They extracted money, imposed taxes and robbed the people through various means. The officers had been instrumental in the making and unmaking of kings, change of dynasties, loss of blood and burning of towns and villages. They took bribes and received presents both forced and voluntary. Some of these officials are recorded, in the chronicles, to have stolen the idols of gods and to have even protected robbers to share their thefts.

### Salaries

The upper classes were the privileged section of the whole community. The kings appointed high and important officials from among the Brahmins and the military classes only. High officials received high pays and the menials only a bare subsistence. The *Sabhapati* in the reign of king Jaya-pida, received a daily allowance of one lakh *dinnars*. Emoluments depended on the position and status that a person held in the society. Those who belonged to the upper classes and were favourites, received the highest salaries. Rudrapa, who was a favourite of the king Ananta, received one and a half lakh of *dinnars* daily. Even these high salaries failed to quench their abnoxious greed for money and their life long habit of taking bribes and gifts continued unabated. At the village level, the petty officials were more active in these corrupt practices and they scarcely looked deterred for a moment in their endeavours to accumulate wealth even in the face of suffering peasantry.

### Currency

Kalhana has often mentioned the word *dinnar*, while quoting the prices of commodities during the ancient period. This word designates a gold coin being used as currency, besides other coins, which were made of silver and copper. Harsha got minted gold, silver and copper coins. All currency was designated as *dinnara* in the beginning, *dyar* in modern Kashmiri, but later in the medieval age, it came to be used exclusively for gold coins.

Various household articles were also used as media of

exchange. Barter system existed in the early period, but subsequently it lost much of its importance due to the minting of coins. Grains, particularly rice, also formed a medium of exchange in ancient Kashmir.

There is a uniform similarity in the type of ancient coins and this has remained unchanged for many centuries. The coins were made of various metals but we find abundance of copper coins only. Two interesting conclusions can be drawn while studying the ancient coins. Firstly, there is extreme rareness of silver coins and upto this time, only one has been found. Secondly, Harsha is the only king who issued gold coins.

It was a common practice with the people to invest savings in gold and silver ornaments and hence only copper coins, cowries, rice and other articles moved freely in the market, being used as currency or media of exchange.

### Finance

Wealth was the great asset for a king. The most wealthiest king was considered the most powerful and a king of limited means was looked down upon as a pauper, against whom as rebellion could be conveniently organised. Most of the king waged wars to satisfy their appetite for booty, treasures and wealth. The victorious king and his followers captured all the wealth of the vanquished and utilised it for their own benefit and partly, for preparation of another offensive.

Wealth was a very powerful factor in favour of a king in the ancient period. So, in their endeavours to multiply it, majority of the Kashmiri kings, resorted to various method fair or foul, such as wars, confiscations, loot, taxes, levies, exactions, imposts, bribes, presents and fines. The chief source of income to the kingdom was the land revenue. The collection of revenue on the whole was irregular, unsystematic and unjust and was entrusted to different officials. These officials were asked to compete with each other in the collection, which led to the extractions by oppression.



“Under the old revenue system, the produce could not be removed from the threshing floor by the villagers until the state’s share had taken from it.” As often a long time elapsed until this was done, special watchman known as *shikdars* were employed in all villages. Land revenue was collected in kind and the share of the king varied from time to time. The king sold its grain stores to the citizens. The second source of the income to the state was, through taxes levied on the subjects. Mostly, the agriculturists and the traders had to share the main burden of taxation. There were numerous taxes, viz., tax for the establishment, tax for the maintenance of village officials, tax on marriages, taxes on household and private affairs and taxes in the form of outposts and levies. Customs duties were levied on frontier watch stations. Goods imported or exported were stamped in the king’s name with red lead and a duty was imposed on such merchandise.

#### Character of the Kings

All monarches, except a few, do not seem to possess a high character. Some of them were despots, some purely kings, some benevolent, and some military dictators. The Kashmiris suffered immeasurably in their reigns. The whole of the ancient period of Kashmir’s history in full of confusions, turmoils, rebellions, intrigues, conspiracies, battles and internecine wars. In spite of all this, almost all of them look interest in religious activities, such as building of shrines and establishment of religious endowments. But this was done mostly for the attainment of personal power, which depended on the support of the Brahmans. Only a few kings looked after their subjects well, cared for kingly duties and tried for the betterment of the people. The rest cared for their own luxuries and comforts.

Most of the kings were sexually very active and lustful and kept many women in their *heram*.

Vajradita had a large number of women, “with whom he diverted himself in turn, like a stallion with the mares”. They also kept concubines and their offshoots became kings. Sometimes the queen of a king were appeased by the military officials.

Kalassa, who was a shameless brute, indulged in illicit connection with his daughters-in-law.

Most of the kings, encouraged murder, loot and arson, and bestowed on the people, honours and grants, for political murders. But, we have also records of benevolent monarchs who were law-givers and patrons of art and learning. Some were themselves scholars, poets of great repute and adept in the art of dancing.

### Wars

The two military sections, the *Ekangas* and the *Damaras*, seem to have played a most important role in the history of warfare in the ancient period. These groups had been pressed into military service by different kings and claimants, throughout this period. Wars were generally fought on the river banks near the castles and in the cities, especially in the premises of the capital of the kingdom.

Arrows, spears, swords, and even stones were used in these wars. Burning arrows were much in vogue. These were smeared with oils and were used for causing fire in the enemy camps from a distance. Horses and elephants were also employed on many occasions. The use of banners, kettle drums and ensigns was an interesting feature of the wars. Shouting of slogans and call of hymns were also resorted to, in order to *instil* enthusiasms, confidence and courage. Political trickery and diplomacy also played its part. Disguised ascetics were smuggled inside the forts of the enemy and even sometime the king themselves played this role.

Fire, looting and arson were a regular feature of any war. No mercy was shown to the traitors, the rebels and the enemies. After the war, the captive of both the sexes were made slaves and the females fell before the onslaughts of sexual drivers of the triumphant party. Kalasa, after defeating his rebel son, is recorded to have indulged in sexual intercourses, with the captured wives of his son.



## Army

The army administration was under a minister, who often held the post of the prime minister. Expeditions were led by the ministers or by the king in person. The army was composed of the cavalry, the infantry, the king's bodyguards and elephants. Castles, forts, frontier posts and watch stations were kept under special prefects. The army consisted of the *E kangas*, the *Damaras*, the *Chandals* and the *Mlecchas*. The Muslims have been referred to as the *Turuskas*, the *Yavanas* and the *Mlecchas* in the ancient chronicles, which unmistakably proves that the army included the Muslims also during the period.

## Feudalism

Generally, all lands belonged to the king and cultivators had only agricultural rights. They cultivated lands and paid the fixed share to the king. The whole country had been divided among the feudal chiefs by the kings. *Jagirs* were granted to the upper classes, military commanders, princes and the Brahmans. Land was divided into various sections; the crown lands, the estates, the religious endowments to shrines, and the private lands. The officials, the landlords, and the feudal chiefs, looted the poor agriculturists. They even advised the kings to search and find wealth from the land. Some of the kings are reported to have taken all the produce of the land leaving nothing for the cultivators.

During the reign of Jayapida, not a single grain of the produce was given to the cultivators for 3 years. The king was joined in this loot by his favourites, friends and officials, with the result that the agriculturists were reduced to starvation.

The Brahmans was the most privileged class, and thus invariably received big tracts of land as religious endowments and *Jagirs*. They thrived on these and were a prosperous community on the whole. The second class in point of importance were the *Kshatryas* or the military class.

## Agriculture

The majority of the people were simple cultivators, who paid the due share of the produce to the feudal lord or to the king. The agriculturists paid the land revenue in kind. Different varieties of grains were grown but the staple food of the masses was rice. This has always been the chief and the most important produce of Kashmir on account of geographical reasons. The other food stuffs produced in the valley were, barley, maize and fruits. The grapes of Kashmir have been repeatedly mentioned by the historians of ancient period. It enjoyed a high reputation outside the valley also. The special quality of the Kashmiri grapes has been designated as *Kasmira* in the Sanskrit works. Besides, being consumed as a fruit by the people, the grapes were used in the manufacture of wine as well.

Big irrigation canals were constructed by benevolent monarchs. The kings like Suvarna, Damodara, Lalitaditya and Avantivarman took great interests in the improvement of agriculture. They got constructed, bunds, streams, and canals for irrigation purposes. The chronicles refer to Surya as a great engineer in the reign of Avantivarman, who designed and constructed a network of canals in the valley for purposes of irrigation.

The distribution and size of each canal was fixed for every village. The result of these measures was that the agriculture flourished in Kashmir. We have references to the droughts and the floods, which caused the most terrible famines in the country. The description of famines in the ancient history of Kashmir is heart rending. The hungry masses fought and snatched remnants of food from each other like vultures. Many committed suicide by throwing themselves into rivers and fires and thus escaped from their miserable plights. During the famines, one could see corpses lying on roadside with vultures and dogs assembled on this flesh feast.



### Saffron

The grape and the saffron cultivation has continued from ancient times in the valley, which has been famous for the *Kashmira*, and for the *Kesar* and these have been praised by all historians and travellers alike. Saffron cultivation continues to flourish in Padampora from times immemorial.

### Religion

Buddhism held an important position in the early ancient history but subsequently Hinduism had its sway too and the two religions went side by side for many centuries.

Religious endowments were granted and sometimes confiscated by the kings. At certain occasions, the killing of all animals was prohibited. The priests had their own corporations. They also participated in the state politics and were sometimes, instrumental in bringing about the overthrow of governments. There existed the ceremony of "wearing skins of cow and other animals in cases of serious penances." The Brahman class, often brought pressure on the kings by their hunger strikes. The atheists have also been referred to in this period.

The Kashmiris evolved a religious philosophy, known as Shaivism which is different in many respects from that of the vedantic philosophy.

### The Early Society

The Aryan society in the beginning of the ancient period, pooled their resources together and worked and produced collectively. They were divided into groups or tribes. Every one worked, not for his own individual self, but for the benefit of all. Later there came into existence a division of labour. But this division of labour had no effect on the status of a person, because this was only a division of work and he was still the respectable member of the coherent society. With the increase of the Aryan population in Kashmir, the importance

of the divisions of labour increased, and ultimately resulted in social divisions and the creation of castes. This is how the division of labour and later, divisions in the society, came into existence in Kashmir. The early people were animal breeders and tamers. Then a section of them started agriculture, another restored to melting of metals and so on and so forth. This sharp division of society shattered the concept of collectivism in production and gave rise to the institution of private property. Every one now worked for his self and for his own family.

### Divisions of the Society

In Kashmir, castes came into existence at a later period. This process went on and in the days of Jayasimha, we find nearly sixty four castes in the society. The people as reflected in the historical records, seems to have been divided into the following classes i.e. Brahmans, Kshtryas, Kayasthas, Merchants, Agriculturists, Chandals, Shudras, Vaishas and Mleeches. Among all these classes, the Brahmans occupied the most prominent place and existed as a distinct caste throughout the ancient age. The military classes such as the Damaras, the Tantrins and the Ekangas have also played an important role in the history of the Valley.

### The Castes

As stated elsewhere, the Brahmans occupied the highest position in the society. Next to them was the military class of the Kshtryas. The whole administration was centred in their hands. The early rulers of the valley were the Brahmans. Next came the Kshtryas, who shared sovereignty with them. These two classes were the upper classes, who controlled every thing and the rest belonged to the lower classes, who carried the wishes of the ruling class. The kings of Kashmir, were always afraid of the Brahmans, who exerted enormous influence over the people. In pursuance of their policy of appeasement, they granted them many concessions and tried to win them over to their side.



The Brahmans received grants of estates, posts, presents and various privileges. The Council invariably included atleast a representative of this class. Nearly all important posts were occupied by them. They received presents and estates in the form of religious endowments, which often included gold, silver and cows. Avantivarman is recorded to have given much gold to this class. The Brahmans were generally given preferential treatment in various administrative and judicial matters.

The military class, the Kshatrays, also shared the above favours. The Vaishas, i.e. agriculturists, traders, and artisans were the exploited class, who worked, laboured and produced for the upper classes. The fruits of their labour were shared by their masters, and they had a subordinate position in the society. Only a few of them, rose to the high positions during ancient times, not by dint of their merit, but out of favouritism. The tribal wars, class struggles and acute divisions gave rise to the fourth class, namely the Shudras. They were the menials, who were no better than the slaves. The captives, became the fourth class and were assigned the task of serving the three main classes of the society and were a saleable commodity.

The majority of the subjects as stated earlier, were the agriculturists. Next came the traders, then labours, such as boatmen, watchmen, gardeners, dyers and other artisans. The labourers were called *Rora*, in ancient Kashmir. The other classes like, butchers, fuel sellers and market gardeners also existed in the 11th century. The system of forced labour existed, and it received prominence during the 9th century.

### Customs and Habits

The people of Kashmir had their peculiar social customs and habit. They observed different ceremonies, rituals and festivals. The cruel custom of *sati* was in vogue during the ancient period. Its practice enjoined on a widow to burn herself alive, supposedly of her own accord, on the funeral pyre of her dead husband. This custom had continued for ages in India as well in Kashmir. But it was observed by the upper classes more than the lower classes of society.

Child marriage was common right upto the 10th century. Nanda, wife of Gopala-Varman, it is recorded, was a little girl when her husband died.

'The inhabitants of Kashmir are pedestrians, they have no riding animals, nor elephants. The noble among them ride in *Katta*, carried on the shoulders of men' writes, Alberuni, who visited Kashmir. The people kept beards and shaving was introduced in the 11th century. The use of mirrors is also mentioned during this century. Ear-rings were worn by the kings, the nobles, and the upper classes. The people wore white head dresses. Oil lamps were in vogue but the rich classes had the monopoly of making illuminations, which was subsequently made general by Harsha. *Kangaries* are mentioned in the 10th century. The *Kangar*, with its hot embers is slipped under the voluminous gown and it scarcely ever leaves the poorer classes during winter. The people sleep with it, and in a sitting posture, invariably bend their head over the glowing coals.

The women used ornaments like necklaces, golden bracelets on hands for the enhancement of beauty. The king, the ministers and the Brahmans could put a brilliant saffron pomade on their beards. The chewing of betel leaves was a habit with the upper classes. Some of the kings were exceedingly fond of betels. It was an expensive luxury in those days.

### Abuses

Rebukes could be hurled by all on their opponents, by women on their husbands and vice versa. Even the members of higher classes were adopt in calling bad names to each other. Such references in the chronicles relating to Ananta and Suryamati are full of interest. The queen rebuked her husband Ananta and called bad names to his relations and thus made her husband to commit suicide in agony. Nicknames were also common.



## Food

Rice has remained the staple food of the Kashmiris from ancient times. The other articles of food were maize and barley. Vegetables and meat was also known to them. The poor masses took rice with *Wpalhak* or barley or vegetables. The upper classes ate fried meat with rice and drank delightful wine, which was scented with flowers and cooled. Fish was also taken.

## Language and Literature

The people had a common language, which they had evolved themselves. Sanskrit was the language of Brahmins and the upper classes. Some of the kings were patrons of literature. Grammar was also known to them. Kisa was a famous grammarian of the 8th century. Udbahata wrote a treatise on politics in the 8th century. Sankula, was a prominent poet who wrote a famous poem; the rise of 'the world' in 851 A.D. Astrology had been a special subject of study of the Brahmins. Bhaskaracharya Aryabhatta and Ratna Kantha were the famous astrologers, whose works are considered authentic even now. In every village there used to be an astrologer, who was consulted by the people. Kalasa introduced choral singing and his son, Harsha knew "all languages and was a poet in all languages himself."

The Kashmiris of the ancient period wrote books on various branches of knowledge like religion, medicine, astronomy and literature. The first book on Shaivism, *Sparda Karika* was written by Vasugupta in the 8th century. Other books on the subject were *Spārnda-Vritti* by Kallata Bhat, *Shiva-drishhti* by Somananda, and *Pratya-Bhijna* and *Stotravali* by Utpaladeva. The most important authority on Shaivism was the famous author, Abhinava-gupta, who lived in the 10th century.

A great work on fiction entitled *Katha-Saritsagara* was produced by Soma-deva. Bhilhana wrote *Vikramankadeva-Charita* in the second century. The other famous writer was Markha, who completed his *Kantha-Charita* and Jayadratha wrote

*Hariyharits Chantamani.*

Many monumental works on the history of Kashmir were produced during the ancient period but unfortunately they are not extant now. Charaka and Narhari wrote on medical science. There were also produced political treatises and Ramachandra, Bhalla and Ananda were the writers on the subject, who flourished during the 12th century.

**Fine Arts**

Painting was known during the ancient period, and special artists were employed for painting and decorating the shrines. Beautiful portraits were painted. When Harsha saw the portrait of a lady named Candala, the queen of Karnata, he fell in love with her. Artists were also imported from outside Karhmir. Some of the kings were patrons of fine arts and even they were artist themselves. When Uccala, was being murdered by the conspirators, one of his officials who was an artist was so absorbed in painting on the wall that he knew nothing what had happened near him. Sculpture was known and idols were prepared of mud and various metals and carved out of stones. The Brahmans were experts in idol making.

**Ancient Architecture**

Centuries of turmoil, wars and revolutions have destroyed nearly all ancient architectures. Only a few remains are found now and these also in a most dilapidated condition and not in a state of careful preservation. "The architectual remains of Kashmir are perhaps the most remarkable of the existing monuments of India, as they exhibit undoubted traces of the influence of Grecian art. The Kashmirian fames are distinguished by the graceful elegance of their outlines, by the massive boldness of their parts and by the happy propriety of their decorations. They cannot indeed, view with the severe simplicity of the Parthenian, not with the luxuriant gracefulness of the monument of Lysicrates but they possess great beauty, different indeed, yet quite their own."



All ancient architecture can be divided into two classes, namely religious and monumental. Nearly all kings built temples with idols. Some of them also got constructed colossal statues of Buddha and other deities. Besides, most of the ancient kings had a passion for the construction of huge palaces. Every palace had several rooms, with its walls painted and decorated. There were private apartments and public halls also in every palace. There was an assembly hall for commons, the inner chamber for the upper classes and also, for secret discussions. Every palace had dancing halls which were known as *Natya Madyapta*. All these halls had lofty roofs with many pillars. There also existed special rooms for the guests and the relatives of the king. Elaborate arrangements were made for religious worship in every palace. It also included the hall of four columns which was known as *Ca'ughtanbha*.

### **Singing, Dancing and Plays**

Singing, dancing and dramatic performances had been a regular feature of the ancient society. Every court had a host of amusers. Songs, folk-lore and religious hymns were sung. Each court had its bard, who recited verses. Dancing girls flocked every court and every temple. They danced on coronations and on various festive occasions in the palace halls. Maiden singers occupied a noteworthy position in the amusements of kings. Some of these maiden singers enchanted the kings to such an extent that they came to finally occupy the position of queens. Ranga, the famous *Domba* singer became the queen of Cakravarman. He kept several dancing girls in his seraglio. The king and the upper classes witnessed concerts on the stage or in the dancing halls. Harsha was himself an expert in the art of dancing. He taught this art in person to the dancing girls.

Men also knew the art of dancing. Parvagupta, a minister danced in the royal assembly with his loin cloth taken off. Dancing baffoons and the like entertained public and there were also strolling players. People could play on flute, on earthen pots and brass vessels in the 12th century. Choral singing was introduced by Kalasa in the 11th century. He also

improved the technique of female dancing. Singers, dancers and actors were patronised by the kings.

### Wine

There existed many distilleries and breweries for the manufacture of wine in different parts of the kingdom. Often spirit distillers got superior positions and some of their daughters were made queens by the kings. The Kashmiris know wine, especially the dancers were addicted to it. Mostly the women of upper classes, ladies of high positions and mistresses of the kings took wine and their faces are reported to have been fragrant with spirits. The habit of drinking increased day-by-day, upto the 13th century, when it was prohibited by the Muslim saints.

The Brahman-*gurus*, did not drink spirits while singing their chants. There were certain Tantric rites in which drinking of wine was also resorted to. A king took many cups in the company of *gurus* and without moderation. There used to be taverns and wine bars in the country and were known as *Prapa*.

### Women

Widows and women of low origin could not be legally married. Widows of high ranking officials were taken into the royal seraglio. A beautiful maiden's brother, through the charming spell of his sister on the king, obtained various advantages and concessions. The kings kept many wives and some of them begot dozen of children. There are references to *dowager* queens acting as regents and guardians of minor kings and princes. Some people shared their wives. Even in the 11th century, a wife was shared by two brothers. A queen, on her own accord went to other men for the satisfaction of her sexual desire. Some of the queens possessed a licentious character and used to have paramours. The queens and mistresses of the king and ladies of upper classes took part in political conspiracies and court intrigues.



## Slavery, Beggary and Prostitution

The slavery, as an institution existed in the ancient society. The captives in wars were treated as slaves. The wives of the enemy soldiers were kept as slaves in the household. Some time, the slaves were sold in the open market, and even to the *Mlechas*. Slaves brought in open markets were considered clever and of high value. Sons of slaves were called *Kayasthas*. Slaves, especially slave girls were kept by the upper and the rich classes. Slave girls are recorded to have been brought from foreign lands for the services of Harsha, whose perversion in sex was proverbial.

Famines, floods, wars and other natural calamities reduced the masses to abject poverty and some of them resorted to beggary. Professional beggars lived on alms and charity. Prostitution as an institution existed and Kalhana has censured some of the kings like, Kalasa, Ksemagupta, Uccala and Harsha for their lust for prostitutes, paramours and courtesans.

## Ceremonies

*Utham*, or the eight day of every lunar month was observed as a "no meat day." On the new year day, special feasts were arranged and people went out of their homes for sight seeing and visits to relatives. Puja ceremony was held in every home. The Kashmiris had to suffer during winter and as such burned it on the day of *Bhima-sen*. Similarly, *Tila-Utham* was observed as the day of burning *Kangries*, or fire-pots. On the occasion of the first snow, dear and near ones were tricked to receive a handful of snow from relatives. In early spring, the *guru* would visit each house and present a painting to the students and the ceremony was known as *Guru-tari*. Newly married brides would receive money on the day of *Shi-shur*, by keeping an empty *Kangri* in front of the guests, who would put money into it. *Herath* or the marriage night of Shiva and Paravati, was an occasion of great festivity, which lasted for a fortnight. For this purpose, the whole house was cleaned and coloured. Earthen pots filled with walnuts, flowers and water were kept in room. After the

*Vatak-puja*, these pots were drowned in rivers by the master of the house, who would return with a basket of walnuts. When asked as to who he was, he would say that I am *Ram-braroo*, or the harbinger of good fortune.

“Reverence to Hara who like the tree of paradise;  
Who is beautified by a seam of light;  
Emitted by the jewels on the hoods of the serpents  
adoring him;  
And in whom those freed find eternal rest.”



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